

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

ÉTUDE DES LIENS ENTRE LE SCHÈME D'ATTACHEMENT DE LA MÈRE,  
LA QUALITÉ DE LA RELATION MÈRE-ADOLESCENTE,  
ET L'ADAPTATION PSYCHO-SOCIALE DE LA JEUNE ADULTE

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## LISTE DES SIGLES

IWM	Internal Working Model
AAI	Adult Attachment Interview
AAP	Adult Attachment Projective
MAROS	Mother-Adolescent Relation Observation System
MACRIS	Mother-Adolescent Conflict Resolution Interaction System
SCIS	Système de codification d'interactions de soutien
IDCS	Interactional Dimensions Coding System
PARQ	Parental Acceptation and Rejection Questionnaire
SCL-90	Symptom Checklist—90

## RÉSUMÉ

La théorie de l'attachement (Bowlby, 1969, 1973) suggère que les premières relations qu'une personne développe avec ses figures d'attachement influencent son développement psychosocial et son schème d'attachement. Plusieurs études ont documenté l'influence du schème d'attachement des mères sur la qualité de leur relation avec leur enfant (e.g. Crowell & Feldman, 1991) ainsi que l'influence de la qualité de la relation d'attachement que l'enfant développe avec sa mère sur son adaptation future (e.g. Thompson, 1999). La présente thèse s'intéresse à l'influence du schème d'attachement des mères et de la qualité de la relation mère-fille durant l'adolescence sur l'adaptation psychosociale de jeunes femmes au début de l'âge adulte. Ce lien est analysé sous deux angles.

Dans un premier article, nous évaluons les liens entre le schème d'attachement des mères et la qualité de leur communication avec leur adolescente dans des contextes positifs et négatifs; puis, nous évaluons si, longitudinalement, le schème d'attachement des mères influence la qualité de la communication de leur fille adulte avec un(e) ami(e) lors d'une tâche de soutien social. Au temps 1, l'entrevue d'attachement adulte (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) est administré à 40 mères, et la communication mère-adolescente est observée lors de deux discussions filmées. Au temps 2, 33 des filles, maintenant au début de l'âge adulte, participent à deux discussions filmées avec leur meilleur(e) ami(e). Les résultats montrent qu'au temps 1, la communication mère-fille chez les mères ayant un schème d'attachement sécurisant/autonome est caractérisée par des niveaux plus élevés d'implication que chez les mères ayant un schème d'attachement préoccupé. De plus, au temps 2, les filles adultes ayant bénéficié d'une relation avec une mère sécurisant/autonome, lorsque comparées aux filles ayant vécu avec une mère au schème d'attachement évitant, se montrent plus habiles à soutenir un(e) ami(e) qui leur confie une difficulté personnelle. Finalement, les résultats montrent que le niveau de comportements conflictuels entre la mère et son adolescente modère le lien entre le schème d'attachement de la mère au temps 1 et l'habileté des filles adultes à offrir du soutien à leur ami(e) au temps 2. Seules les jeunes femmes dont la mère avait un schème d'attachement évitant et qui vivaient par ailleurs des niveaux élevés de conflits avec leur mère durant l'adolescence ont moins d'habiletés de soutien social à l'âge adulte. Dans un deuxième article utilisant le même échantillon, nous examinons l'hypothèse selon laquelle le schème d'attachement des jeunes adultes et la qualité actuelle de leur relation avec leur mère médient les liens entre, d'une part, la communication mère-adolescente et la négativité perçue dans la relation mère-adolescente et d'autre part, la détresse psychologique à l'âge adulte. Les résultats montrent que les jeunes femmes ayant un schème d'attachement préoccupé au temps 2 percevaient, durant leur adolescence, des niveaux plus élevés de négativité dans leur relation avec leur mère, et étaient moins impliquées dans la résolution de conflit lorsque comparées à celles ayant un schème d'attachement évitant; de plus leurs discussions avec leur mère étaient caractérisées par des niveaux plus élevés de comportements négatifs que celles ayant un schème d'attachement sécurisant. Les résultats montrent également que le niveau d'intimité émotionnelle perçue avec la mère à l'âge adulte agit comme médiateur de la relation entre la négativité perçue dans la relation mère-adolescente et la détresse psychologique à l'âge adulte.

La discussion générale intègre les résultats des deux études et propose des pistes de recherche futures.

**MOTS CLÉS :** Attachement, adolescence, jeunes adultes, communication, soutien social, adaptation psychosociale, qualité relationnelle, entrevue d'attachement adulte, test projectif de l'attachement adulte.



# **CHAPITRE 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

La théorie de l'attachement (Bowlby, 1969, 1973) s'intéresse à l'influence des premières relations avec les parents sur la régulation de la détresse chez l'enfant ainsi que sur son développement et son adaptation future, et ce tout au long de la vie (Sroufe, 1988; Main, 1995; Thompson, 1999). Plusieurs études ont documenté l'influence du système d'attachement sur les interactions mère-enfant et l'adaptation durant l'enfance, mais la période de la transition entre l'adolescence et le début de l'âge adulte a été moins étudiée. La présente thèse cherche à enrichir les connaissances empiriques quant à l'influence du schème d'attachement de la mère et de la qualité relationnelle entre la mère et son adolescente sur l'adaptation psychosociale de la fille lors de la période de transition vers l'âge adulte.

### *Contexte théorique*

Durant les premières années de la vie de l'enfant, l'attachement est principalement un système comportemental qui vise à assurer sa sécurité dans le but de permettre l'exploration de son environnement. Pendant cette période, le système d'attachement et le système d'exploration sont complémentaires, la proximité à la figure d'attachement étant utilisée comme une base de sécurité permettant l'exploration. L'enfant doit maintenir l'équilibre entre ces deux systèmes comportementaux, en analysant à la fois les caractéristiques de l'environnement ainsi que la disponibilité et le comportement probable de son parent (Cassidy, 1999). Par exemple, l'enfant dans un environnement qu'il juge menaçant inhibe son exploration et active son système d'attachement qui lui permettra de retrouver la sécurité procurée par la proximité à sa figure d'attachement. Lorsque l'enfant se sent rassuré, il retourne explorer.

Puisque les parents diffèrent quant à la façon de répondre aux signaux de détresse de leurs enfants, et que les patrons d'interactions avec les figures d'attachement et leurs

réponses affectives sont répétées dans le temps, les enfants adaptent leurs attentes et leurs comportements et modulent l'expression de leurs émotions dans le but de maintenir le lien avec leurs figures d'attachement (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). Ils se construisent ainsi des attentes pour leurs interactions futures avec leurs parents, et éventuellement, pour l'ensemble des relations émotionnellement intimes. Ces schèmes cognitifs, appelés « schèmes d'attachement », représentent un ensemble de règles largement inconscientes qui régissent l'organisation de l'information liée aux expériences d'attachement et qui permettent ou limitent l'accès à cette information, ainsi qu'aux sentiments et idées lui étant associées (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985).

Chez l'adulte, un schème d'attachement sécurisant/autonome représente une confiance fondamentale en sa capacité de solliciter chez ses figures d'attachement du soutien et du réconfort lors des difficultés, une reconnaissance de l'importance des relations d'attachement, une capacité à y réfléchir de façon cohérente, et de la flexibilité dans l'expression des émotions (West & Sheldon-Keller, 1994).

Un schème d'attachement insécurisant représente au contraire un manque de confiance en ses capacités de solliciter chez l'autre du soutien, et un manque de flexibilité dans l'expression de ses émotions (West & Sheldon-Keller, 1994). L'attachement insécurisant se répartit en deux pôles : la désactivation et l'hyperactivation du système d'attachement.

Les personnes ayant un schème d'attachement évitant se retrouvent du côté de la désactivation. Elles reconnaissent difficilement l'importance que les relations d'attachement ont eue sur leur développement émotif et tendent à inhiber l'expression de leur détresse. Elles valorisent l'action et l'autonomie plutôt que la réflexion et l'intimité. Ces personnes ont souvent vécu du rejet en réponse à l'expression de leur détresse de la part de leur figure d'attachement durant l'enfance, et la plupart du temps ont une vision idéalisée de leur enfance, ou encore dénigre froidement l'importance que les interactions avec leurs parents ont eue sur le développement de leur personnalité (Hesse, 1999).

Les personnes ayant un schème d'attachement préoccupé se retrouve du côté de l'hyperactivation, c'est-à-dire qu'elles craignent l'abandon, et exagèrent l'expression de leurs émotions dans le but de recevoir du soutien. Elles vivent souvent de la colère face aux figures d'attachement. Ces personnes ont souvent interagit avec des parents inconstants et intrusifs, ce qui leur a appris à demeurer hypervigilants face aux comportements des figures d'attachement et à exagérer l'expression de leurs émotions dans le but de recevoir du soutien.

Une classification « non-résolu » peut être surajoutée à un des schèmes d'attachement lorsqu'il y a des indices de traumatismes liés à l'attachement (abus, deuil) qui n'ont pas été résolus et causent une faille dans la métacognition lorsque la personne en discute (Hesse, 1999). Ces personnes peuvent avoir vécu la perte d'une figure d'attachement ou avoir été victimes d'abus de la part d'une figure d'attachement. Ces situations rendent difficile l'utilisation de la relation d'attachement pour calmer la détresse. C'est pourquoi ces personnes ne développent pas de stratégies organisées pour y faire face et ont tendance à entrer dans un état dissociatif lorsqu'elles en discutent, puisque le traumatisme demeure source de détresse. Ces personnes reçoivent tout de même une classification alternative qui reflète leur état d'esprit général quant aux relations d'attachement.

La théorie de l'attachement suggère que les comportements de la mère avec son enfant seraient influencés par son schème d'attachement. En effet, un adulte ayant expérimenté des interactions avec des figures d'attachement sensibles et acceptantes durant l'enfance sera mieux outillé pour répondre à la détresse de son propre enfant avec de l'empathie et du support émotionnel (Breherton & Munholland, 1999). Plusieurs études ont vu le jour à ce sujet et ont documenté le large éventail des comportements et des caractéristiques des dyades mère-enfant qui sont lié au schème d'attachement de la mère (e.g. Crowell & Feldman, 1991; Adam, Gunnar, & Tanaka, 2004).

Des chercheurs se sont également intéressés aux liens entre comportements de la dyade mère-enfant et le schème d'attachement chez l'enfant (e.g. Dubois-Comtois & Moss, 2004 , Humber & Moss, 2005) alors que d'autres ont montré des liens entre le système d'attachement des parents et le développement psychosocial de l'enfant, et ce autant dans des échantillons de la communauté (Cowan, Cowan, Cohn, Pearson, 1996) que des échantillons cliniques (Crowell & Feldman, 1989). De nombreuses études ont documenté l'influence du schème d'attachement de l'enfant lui-même sur son adaptation actuelle (e.g. Moss, Rousseau, Parent, St-Laurent, & St-Onge, 1998) ainsi que son adaptation future dans différents domaines (pour un résumé voir Thompson, 1999). L'ensemble des études évaluant l'influence de l'attachement a montré que l'attachement sécurisant, à la fois chez la mère et chez l'enfant, est associé à des comportements parentaux plus sensibles et adaptés aux besoins de l'enfant et à un développement psychosocial plus harmonieux de ce dernier, comparés à l'attachement insécurisant. Bien que les liens entre l'attachement de l'enfant, ses interactions avec ses parents et son adaptation sociale soient largement documentés durant les périodes préscolaire et scolaire, moins de données sont disponibles à l'adolescence et lors de la transition vers l'âge adulte. C'est à cette période que s'intéresse la présente thèse.

### *Les particularités de la période de l'adolescence et de la transition à la vie adulte*

L'adolescence est une période de changements de plusieurs aspects de la personne. Le système d'attachement n'échappe pas à cette évolution. En effet, la recherche d'autonomie caractéristique de l'adolescence modifie grandement le système d'attachement, tel qu'il s'est formé durant la petite enfance.

Au niveau cognitif, l'adolescence est la période d'émergence de la pensée formelle. Ce type de pensée permet à l'adolescent davantage de flexibilité et la possibilité de réévaluer ses expériences avec ses parents. Ces nouveaux outils cognitifs vont permettre de dégager des expériences passées une opinion globale quant aux expériences

d'attachement (Allen & Land, 1999). L'adolescent sera alors en mesure de les intégrer, ce qui est considéré comme la consolidation du schème d'attachement. Grâce à ces changements cognitifs caractéristiques de l'adolescence, les comportements d'attachement, qui se distinguaient selon les différentes figures d'attachement durant l'enfance, forment maintenant un schème d'attachement qui va gouverner et permettre de prédire le comportement futur avec les enfants et les conjoints (Allen & Land, 1999).

Alors que l'influence du système d'attachement sur les relations parents-enfants a été étudiée dans des contextes très variés, autant dans des situations conçues pour générer de la détresse (procédure de séparation-réunion) que dans des contextes positifs (moment de pause, collation, bricolage), à l'adolescence, les chercheurs ont surtout utilisé des situations génératrices de détresse, en particulier la résolution de conflit. En effet, la période de l'adolescence est souvent caractérisée par une recrudescence des conflits parent-enfant à cause des changements développementaux qui occasionnent une remise en question des rôles établis, les adolescents ayant tendance à s'engager dans des comportements de recherche d'autonomie qui vont à l'encontre de la tendance des parents à vouloir procurer du soutien à l'enfant (George & Solomon, 1999). Les études ont tout de même montré que le schème d'attachement des mères continue d'influencer les comportements parentaux lorsque les enfants atteignent l'adolescence (Kobak, Ferenz-Gillies, Everhart, & Seabrook, 1994) et que les comportements de communication entre parents et adolescent sont liés au schème d'attachement de l'adolescent (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies & Fleming, 1993; Becker-Stoll, Delius, & Scheitenberge, 2001). Des études ont également montré que le schème d'attachement des adolescents est lié à la qualité de leurs relations avec leur réseau social à l'extérieur du milieu familial (Schneider, Atkinson, & Tardif, 2001; Zimmermann, Maier, Winter, & Grossmann, 2001; Zimmerman, 2004).

Faisant suite à l'adolescence, le début de l'âge adulte est une période d'instabilité et d'exploration identitaire durant laquelle la personne se retrouve libre de rôles sociaux

et d'attentes normatives (Arnett, 2000). Les relations avec la famille d'origine sont donc renégociées. Certaines études se sont intéressées aux caractéristiques des relations parents-enfants durant cette période et ont montré qu'il existait une certaine continuité dans la qualité des relations avec les parents durant l'adolescence et au début de l'âge adulte (e.g. Aquilino, 1997). Allen et Hauser (1996) ont montré des liens entre la qualité de la communication parent-adolescent lors de discussions de conflit sur le schème d'attachement des jeunes adultes, mais aucune étude à ce jour n'a évalué l'influence de la communication mère-adolescente dans d'autres contextes que le conflit sur le schème d'attachement à l'âge adulte.

De plus, certaines études ont montré que la qualité des interactions avec la figure d'attachement durant l'adolescence influence la détresse psychologique lors de la transition à l'âge adulte (e.g. Eberhart & Hammen, 2006; Shulman & Ben-Artzi, 2003) et que le schème d'attachement de jeunes adultes influence également leur adaptation psychologique (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006). Par contre, ces études ont surtout utilisé des données rétrospectives issues de questionnaires, ce qui limite la portée de leurs conclusions.

La présente thèse cherche à répondre à certaines faiblesses soulevées dans la littérature à propos de l'influence du système d'attachement et de la qualité de la relation avec la mère sur l'adaptation psychosociale lors de la transition vers l'âge adulte.

### *Hypothèses*

La première étude examine tout d'abord l'hypothèse selon laquelle le schème d'attachement de la mère influence la qualité de la communication avec sa fille adolescente. Contrairement aux études antérieures utilisant seulement des discussions à propos de sujets anxiogènes, la présente thèse utilise deux types de discussions pour évaluer la qualité de la relation mère-adolescente et ses liens avec le système d'attachement, soit une discussion à propos d'une activité agréable partagée et une

discussion à propos d'une source de conflit. Elle examine également l'hypothèse selon laquelle, lors de la transition vers l'âge adulte, le schème d'attachement de la mère influence l'adaptation sociale de sa fille, en évaluant la qualité de la communication de celle-ci avec une amie dans un contexte de soutien social. Nous examinons l'hypothèse que la communication mère-adolescente modère le lien entre le schème d'attachement de la mère et l'adaptation sociale de sa fille à l'âge adulte.

La deuxième étude examine l'hypothèse selon laquelle la qualité de la relation mère-adolescente influence l'adaptation psychologique des jeunes femmes au début de l'âge adulte. Nous examinons l'hypothèse que le schème d'attachement des jeunes adultes et la qualité perçue de leur relation actuelle avec leur mère agiront comme médiateurs de la relation entre la qualité de la relation mère-adolescente et les symptômes de détresse psychologique au début de l'âge adulte.



## CHAPITRE 1

### ARTICLE 1

Running head: ATTACHMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Maternal Working Models of Attachment, Mother-Adolescent Communication,  
and Social Support in Adulthood.

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### Abstract

This study examined the contribution of mothers' internal working models of attachment (IWM) to the quality of a) relationship with their adolescent daughters and b) their daughters' quality of friendship during adulthood. We expected associations between mothers' IWM and: a) quality of mother-adolescent daughters' communication in positive and negative (conflict) contexts, and b) longitudinally, quality of adult daughters' communication with a friend during a social support task. At time 1, the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) was administered to 40 Caucasian middle-class mothers, and mother-adolescent communication was observed during two videotaped discussions between mother and their adolescent (mean age: 14.9). At time 2, 33 of the adolescents, now young adults (mean age: 20.35), completed two videotaped discussions with their best friend. The findings indicated that at time 1, discussions of secure mothers with teenage daughters showed higher levels of positive involvement than discussions of preoccupied mothers with their daughters. At time 2, social support discussions involving secure mothers' daughters with their friends showed higher levels of interactional synchrony than discussions involving dismissing mothers' daughters. Time 1 mother-adolescent negative conflict moderated the associations between mothers' IWM and quality of communication of adult daughters with their best friends. Our results suggest that beyond quality of mother-adolescent communication, mothers' IWM influences adult daughters' ability to provide emotional support to best friends.

**KEY WORDS:** Attachment, Adult Attachment Interview, adolescents, young adults, mother-adolescent communication, social support, friendship.

### Maternal Working Models of Attachment, Mother-Adolescent Communication, and Social Support in Adulthood.

Since Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy's (1985) seminal work, attachment research has provided evidence that mothers' state of mind about their own attachment experiences during childhood influences communication with their child, especially when the child experiences distress. Attachment theory proposes that individuals construct internal working models (IWM) of attachment from their repeated interactions with their attachment figures, and that IWMs guide future expectations, interpretations, and behavior in close relationships (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). Thus, mothers' IWM is expected to influence their parenting behaviors.

Research using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) has shown that parents' capacity to reflect constructively on attachment relationships experienced during childhood, rather than experiences per se, shapes their responsiveness to infants' attachment signals (see van IJzendoorn, 1995, for a review). In the AAI, a *secure-autonomous* IWM is described as the capacity to explore attachment relationship without distortions. A *secure-autonomous* IWM includes representations of responsive attachment figures, competent self, appropriate behaviors and affects, and it is subject to revision and adjustment in response to current, new attachment experiences. By contrast, an *insecure* model is rigid and includes deficient attachment figures, incompetent self, and maladaptive behaviors and affects. Insecure models of attachment are described as *dismissing* (deactivation of thoughts related to attachment relationships) or *preoccupied* (entanglement with thoughts related to attachment relationships).

Several studies have empirically documented the associations between mothers' attachment classification and characteristics of their relationship with their offspring. A meta-analysis (van IJzendoorn, 1995) of studies dealing with the association between a parent's AAI and responsiveness to their child showed that parental security of attachment accounts for about 12% of the variance related to responsiveness to their

child. For instance, in preparation for an imminent mother-child separation, dismissing and preoccupied mothers prepared their preschool child less thoroughly than secure mothers, and preoccupied mothers were more anxious and showed more difficulty with separation than the other mothers; at reunion, secure mothers were more affectionate, more often sought proximity to their child, and were more often correct in their interpretation of their child's behavior and emotional states than the other mothers. Conversely, children of secure mothers were less avoidant and less negative during reunion than children of insecure mothers (Crowell & Feldman, 1991). In the same vein, relative to other mothers, preoccupied mothers were shown to be higher in angry/intrusive parenting whereas dismissing mothers were lower in warmth/responsiveness but only if they also suffer from depressive symptoms (Adam, Gunnar, & Tanaka, 2004).

The associations between mothers' IWMs and characteristics of their relationship with their offspring have been documented mainly with infants, toddlers, and, to a less extent, with preschool children. This raises the question of whether the linkages observed during infancy and childhood can be generalized to teenage years and adulthood. The objective of this study was to examine the associations between mothers' IWM of attachment and their communication with their teenage girls. In addition, we wanted to examine a) whether mothers' IWMs of attachment predict quality of communication between their adult daughters and the latter's best friend, and b) whether quality of communication between mothers and teen daughters influences the effect of mothers' IWM of attachment on the quality of daughters' communication with a best friend in adulthood.

#### *Attachment and mother-adolescent communication in distress inducing situations*

Adolescence represents a major transition in the parent-child attachment relationship because of the development of adolescents' competencies. Attachment behaviors are elicited less often, they are less likely to be expressed by seeking physical

proximity to caregivers (Zimmermann & Becker-Stoll, 2002), and parents can no longer rely on their child's signals of distress to modulate their behaviors (George & Solomon, 1999). Adolescents rather appear to be engaged in a "flight away" from attachment relationships with parents, seeing their parents' protective behaviors as unsolicited control and restriction of their desire for autonomy (Allen and Land, 1999). Because achieving autonomy and developing relative independence from parents are crucial developmental tasks for adolescents, and because parents' and adolescents' competing goals lead to more frequent conflict during the teenage years (George & Solomon, 1999), we need to examine the factors associated with successful negotiation of adolescents' competing needs and achievement of autonomy in adulthood.

Several studies have documented associations between parent-adolescent communication and concurrent adolescent or young adults' attachment classification. For instance, levels of dysfunctional anger and task avoidance were lower in secure than in insecure adolescents' conflict discussions with their mothers, and levels of assertiveness in teens and mothers were more equal in secure than in insecure teens' discussions (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies & Fleming, 1993). Similarly, higher levels of joy, smiles, conversational signals, and glances towards the mother were found for secure teens relative to other teens (Becker-Stoll, Delius, & Scheitenberge, 2001). By contrast, higher levels of maternal dominance (Kobak et al. 1993) were observed during mother-adolescent discussions involving dismissing adolescents, as well as higher levels of adolescent sadness and withdrawal; and higher levels of anger for preoccupied teens (Becker-Stoll, et al., 2001).

Allen and Hauser (1996) used a longitudinal design to predict young adults attachment classification from early parent-adolescent discussions in which family members (mother, father, and adolescent) expressed their respective opinions and discussed disagreements about hypothetical moral dilemmas. The findings showed that maternal behaviors promoting teenagers' relatedness and autonomy predicted young

adults' AAI coherency (an indication of secure attachment) 11 years later. Also, adolescents' behaviors that inhibited autonomy and relatedness with parents predicted passivity of thought processes during the AAI (an indication of preoccupation) 11 years later.

The above observational studies have showed robust associations between parent-adolescent communication on the one hand, and adolescents' or young adults' attachment classification on the other hand. Less attention has been devoted to the contribution of mothers' IWMs of attachment to the quality of communication with adolescents during conflict resolution. One study showed that, in the context of a discussion about plans for their adolescents leaving home, mothers' attachment classification was associated with characteristics of their relationship with their teens (Kobak, Ferenz-Gillies, Everhart, & Seabrook, 1994). Preoccupied mothers, when compared to other mothers, expressed higher levels of anxiety and higher levels of attention to their own emotional reactions, whereas their adolescents showed lower levels of autonomy. However, we do not know whether these findings can be generalized to conflict discussions.

Research on the association between attachment and mother-adolescent communication is usually based on conflict or other distress inducing communication tasks, because theory predicts that conflict activates the attachment system. Conflicts may generate anxiety and insecurity in partners, and in regulating their anxiety, adolescents and adults are expected to use communication strategies that reflect their IWM (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). A first objective of this study was to examine the links between mothers' attachment classification and behaviors shown during a mother-adolescent conflict discussion. Attachment theory and research suggest that discussions involving secure mothers would be characterized by direct and coherent communication and acknowledgement of feelings, and by constructive problem solving. We expected that secure mothers' discussions with adolescents would show higher levels of involvement in

conflict resolution, and lower levels of negative behaviors and affects than those involving insecure mothers.

*Attachment and communication in positive contexts*

Little is known about the impact of the attachment system on the quality of mother-adolescent communication about positive or neutral topics. According to Kobak et al. (1993), a variety of tasks should be used to evaluate the impact of IWMs on communication because different discussion topics might discriminate between different attachment groups. For instance, whereas discussions about adolescents leaving home are likely to cause anxiety in preoccupied mothers, discussions in which adolescents have to rely on mothers are likely to cause discomfort in dismissing mothers. Assessment of communication in positive (e.g., social support) as well as in negative (conflict) contexts would help identify a larger range of behaviors likely to discriminate among mothers' attachment classification.

There is empirical evidence that neutral discussions representative of daily conversations between mothers and children differentiate childrens' IWMs. In a study asking mothers of preschool children to select and discuss unique events experienced by children during their lifetime (Newcombe & Reese, 2003, 2004), secure children and their mothers, relative to insecure children and their mothers, were more likely to emphasize the evaluative and emotional aspects of everyday events, and to display a consistent and collaborative narrative style. Similarly, mothers of secure children, as compared to mothers of insecure children, were more likely to adopt an emotionally open, elaborative, and coherent discourse when talking about relational issues (Laible, 2004). The empirical linkage between shared experiences and childrens' IWMs raises the question of whether mothers' IWMs predict quality of communication in a positive context.

The second objective of this study was to examine the impact of mothers' attachment classification on communication with adolescent daughters in the context of



mother-adolescent discussions about shared activities, a positive aspect of their relationship. Because security of attachment in adulthood includes the capacity to value attachment relationships and to adopt coherent discourse when discussing attachment issues, we expected that secure mothers and their adolescent would be more comfortable than insecure mothers and their adolescents with acknowledging the importance of their relationship, even in the period of adolescence when conflicts become more salient. For this reason, we expected that secure mothers and their adolescent daughters, as compared with insecure mothers and their daughters, would show higher levels of relationship validation during a discussion about shared activities. Furthermore, we expected that secure mothers' discussions would display higher levels of elaboration, as shown by richer details, and higher levels of collaboration, as shown by greater dyadic involvement during discussion.

When assessing communication about emotional situation, it is also important to take into account the age of the child or adolescent, because child's social competencies grow with advancing age. For example, during the preschool period, Laible and Thompson (1998) showed that both age and attachment security were related to a child's ability to accurately appraise emotions in both an affective perspective-taking task and in interviews surrounding naturally occurring displays of emotion. Age was the strongest and most consistent predictor of emotional understanding across both of the tasks. Furthermore, attachment theory suggests that, with development, goal-corrected partnership between mother and child becomes more refined. In adolescence, it is only around fifteen years old that the development of formal thinking is completely achieved, which, according to Kobak et al. (1999) increase the sophistication in managing the goal-corrected partnership with the parent. The goal-corrected partnership reaches new levels of complexity and coordination as a result of adolescent's enhanced perspective-taking ability and capacity to consider attachment relationship from both their own and their

parents' point of view. For this reason, we expected that older adolescents would display higher levels of communication skills.

#### *Attachment and Social Support*

Attachment theory proposes that the quality of relationships with primary caregivers is an important basis for the development of intimate relationships outside the family. Quality of parent-child communication has been found to be associated with children's positive social development. For instance, mutuality of parent-child emotional expressions has been found to be positively associated with children's prosocial orientations, mutual and harmonious friendships, and levels of peer acceptance in kindergarten (Clark & Ladd, 2000). Because a major task of adolescence and young adulthood is to transfer attachment relationships from parents to peers and to create symmetrical non-hierarchical attachment relationships (Allen & Land, 1999), we raised the question of the linkage between attachment and communication with peers beyond childhood. Some authors have hypothesized that in adolescence and adulthood, a secure IWM would enable individuals to apprehend intimate relationships with confidence, whereas an insecure IWM could lead to erroneous and negative expectations, and consequent compromises in the quality of close friendships (Allen & Land, 1999). A meta-analysis of empirical studies examining linkages between quality of attachment and peer relationships indicated larger effect sizes for peer relationships in late childhood and adolescence than for peer relationships in early childhood, as well as larger effect sizes for close friendships than for relationships with other peers (Schneider, Atkinson, & Tardif, 2001). More specifically, when experiencing negative emotions during a problem solving task, secure adolescents were found to behave less disruptively towards their best friend than did insecure adolescents (Zimmermann, Maier, Winter, & Grossmann, 2001). Also, in contrast to dismissing adolescents, secure adolescents showed emotionally closer friendships, were integrated into larger peer groups, and had more elaborated friendship concepts and more appropriate emotion regulation skills during conflicts with their best

friends (Zimmerman, 2004). It was suggested that caregivers' support during childhood influences one's ability to accept and provide comfort and emotional support to close friends. However, no study to date has assessed the impact of mothers' attachment classification on social support offered to and received by adolescents' and young adults' close friends.

A third objective of the current study was to examine the link between mothers' attachment classification and the quality of daughters' communication with their best friend during a support task. Because attachment theory suggests that secure mothers value attachment relationships and offer their child a positive model of emotion regulation, we expected that daughters of secure mothers would have conversations characterized by higher levels of positive behaviors than would daughters of insecure mothers. More specifically, they would be more attuned to their best friends' needs, as shown by higher levels of synchrony during communication, would show higher levels of support, and higher levels of disclosure of their personal problems.

*Mother-Adolescent Communication as Mediator or Moderator of the Link Between Mothers' IWMs and Quality of Daughters' Social Support Conversations*

Attachment theory proposes that a caregiver's IWM predicts the quality of caregiver-child relationships, and children's psychosocial development. Attachment theory suggests that parenting behaviors act as mediator between mothers' attachment classification and children outcomes. However, few studies have demonstrated a true mediation role of parenting behavior on the link between maternal attachment classification and children outcomes (Atkinson et al., 2005). On the other hand, many studies have shown that the effect of mothers' IWM on parenting and child outcomes is moderated by other variables. For instance, mothers' sensitivity has been found to moderate the association between mothers' IWM, as measured with the AAI, and child attachment security, as measured in the strange situation (Atkinson et al., 2005). In mother-infant dyads with a mismatch in attachment classification, levels of sensitivity

were more akin to child attachment classifications than to mothers' classification. It has been suggested that unexpected levels of sensitivity (i.e., secure mothers with low levels of sensitivity or insecure mothers with high levels of sensitivity) can block the transmission of maternal attachment patterns. In the same vein, if mothers' insecure attachment has been found to predict less than optimal parenting (Adam, Gunnar, & Tanaka, 2004), mothers' depressive symptoms have been found to exacerbate the negative associations between mothers' dismissing IWMs and their warmth/responsiveness to their child. These findings raise the question of whether quality of adolescent-mother communication in adolescence influenced the association between mothers IWM and the quality of daughters communication with best friend in adulthood. This was the fourth objective of this study.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

#### Time 1

Participants were 42 Caucasian French-speaking female adolescents (mean age = 14.9 years, S.D.=1.67) and their mothers (mean age= 42.4 years, S.D.= 4.56), from the Montreal area. All mothers were in a couple relationship, 83% were married or cohabiting with their daughter's father and 17% were no longer living with the father of their daughter, and were in a second union. Mean duration of mothers current couple relationship was 16.83 (S.D.= 7.11). Thirty-four percent of the mothers completed high school, 29% a college degree, and 37% a university degree; 58.5% of the mothers were full time workers, 22% part-time workers, and 19.5% were housewives. Mean family income was \$50,000 (\$CDN). They were recruited through newspaper and radio advertisements asking for mothers of adolescent daughters to volunteer with their daughters for a study on family communication. Families received 40\$ for their participation. Adolescents and their mothers were invited to a 3-hour lab visit. Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) was administered to

mothers. Following the mothers' interviews, adolescents and mothers were introduced to a room in order to have two videotaped conversations. For the first conversation, adolescents were presented with a list of activities and asked to select the ones they had shared with their mother in the past 2 weeks. Then they were asked to rate their appreciation for each of the activity and to talk with their mother about their preferred activity. Mothers and daughters were not given any specific instructions for this discussion, presented as a warm-up facilitating adaptation to the camera. The mean duration of the first discussion was 8.30 min ( $S.D.= 4.13$ ). Following this discussion, adolescents were asked to identify a source of conflict with their mother from an adapted version of the Issues Checklist (Printz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979). Adolescents and mothers were then instructed to discuss the conflict and try to find a resolution. The mean duration of the second discussion was 13.30 min. ( $S.D.= 4.80$ ). In order to prevent carry-over of negative affect from the conflict task into the positive discussion, the order of the discussions was not randomized. Discussions were videotaped with the signed consent of participants.

### Time 2

Approximately five years later, adult daughters were invited to participate with their best friend in a two-hour lab visit. Thirty-three young adults (mean age = 20.35,  $S.D.= 1.61$ ) agreed to participate in this follow-up session. Twenty-five (75.8%) were students and 24 (72.7 %) still lived with their parents. Among those who were no longer living with their parents, 5 lived with their romantic partner (15% of the whole sample). One participant had a child. Daughters and their best friends completed sets of questionnaires separately in adjacent rooms. Then, daughters and best friends took turns completing two 20-min videotaped interaction tasks during which they talked (in the helpee role) to their partner (in the helper role) about their most salient personal problem. A personal problem was defined as any problem whose source was not the other participant (e.g., problems at work, with boyfriend, health, own family etc.). No explicit

instructions regarding role appropriate behaviors were suggested to helpees and helpers. Helpees and helpers were instructed to behave as naturally as they do when disclosing important difficulties or preoccupations to one another. There was a 10 min break between the two conversations. The order of the two discussions was counterbalanced. Immediately after completing their respective support task, helpees completed a post-interaction assessment. Participants received 25\$ for their participation.

T-tests of differences showed that daughters who participated in the Time 2 session were not significantly different from those who did not on Time 1 measures of mothers' socio-economic status ( $p = .84$ ), level of education ( $p = .06$ ), marital satisfaction ( $p = .92$ ) and security of attachment ( $p = .29$ ), and on Time 1 measures of behaviors during the mother-adolescent discussions ( $p = .14$  to  $.96$ ). Furthermore, there were no differences between those who left home and those who did not relate to communication with best friend variables, and no significant associations between age and time 2 communication variables.

### *Measures*

#### *Time 1*

*Adult attachment interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985).* Mothers attachment status was assessed using the AAI. The AAI is a 60 min structured interview. It consists of a series of questions and probes designed to elicit semantic and episodic memories of childhood experiences and evaluations of the ways these experiences affect the current functioning of the individual. Participants are asked to provide descriptions of their relationships with their parents, and specific biographical episodes supporting their account of those experiences. A series of 18 questions address experiences of rejection, being upset, ill or hurt, separations, loss, and abuse. Participants are asked to explain why their caregivers behaved the way they did, and to describe their current relationship with those caregivers. The last few questions refer to participants' perceptions of how these experiences and relationships have affected their adult personality and parenting quality.

All questions and probes were translated and adapted for French-speaking interviewees by the third author. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed for coding. Interviews were classified into one of three categories: (a) Secure-Autonomous yet Freely Valuing of Attachment; (b) Insecure-Dismissing of Attachment Relationships; (c) Insecure-Preoccupied with Attachment Relationship. The Unresolved category was not used because the rater didn't achieve reliability on this classification. The AAI categories parallel the attachment categories of the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978). In this study, we used the criteria specified in version 5.1 of Main and Goldwyn's system to code the transcripts (Main & Goldwyn, 1992). It uses three steps to classify the interviewee's IWM. First, participants probable past experiences with each caregiver in childhood are rated using a 9-point scale. Five types of childhood experiences are rated: (1) loving and care, (2) rejection, (3) neglect of attachment needs, (4) role-reversal in the relationships with the participant, and (5) pressure for achievement. Second, the interviewee's memories and discourse are rated on a 9-point scale for their levels of coherency and integration using eight dimensions: (1) idealization of caregivers, (2) lack of recall, (3) involving anger, (4) passivity of thought, (5) derogation, and (6) overall coherency; the remaining two scales deal with disorganized or unresolved states of mind, namely, (7) unresolved loss, and (8) unresolved trauma, and were not used in this study. In the third and final step, a pattern of ratings is used to classify the interviewee's IWM in the attachment category that best reflects his or her organization of attachment experiences. Participants are classified as being *secure-autonomous* if they value attachment experiences and feel "free to evaluate" particular experiences and relationships. During this interview, these individuals use specific memories of significant events to support their general description of their attachment relationships, thus showing consistency and coherency. These adults also integrate positive and negative aspects of their experiences and feelings fairly. Participants are classified as being *insecure-dismissing* if they report little in terms of episodic memories to support

their evaluation of their attachment experiences, are actively derogating about their attachment experiences, and dismiss the impact of those experiences on themselves and other people and parents. When they describe their relationships positively at the semantic level, they either fail to report memories to support their idealized descriptions, or they report contradictory memories of rejection by their attachment figures.

Participants are classified as being *insecure-preoccupied* if their interview consists of a flood of episodic memories with little or no semantic descriptions and little perspective on attachment relationships. These individuals appear preoccupied with--or confused and lacking in objectivity about--their attachment experiences, and tend to intensify the difficulties they experienced with attachment figures. They often express current, involved anger toward one of their attachment figures. The psychometric properties of the AAI have been examined in several studies (for a review, see Van IJzendoorn, 1995). The AAI classifications have been shown to be robust against interviewer effects, and to remain stable over time, with 77% and 90% stability for a 1–3-month period, and 90% for a 1.5-year period. For instance, a 75% secure and insecure correspondence was found between classifications of older adolescents who participated as infants in a study of alternative living conditions (Hamilton, 2000). The AAI classification is not related to social desirability bias and discourse style of nonattachment-related topics. Studies have shown that the AAI does not assess logical reasoning abilities or verbal fluency. Individuals within the three AAI categories did not differ in their ability to remember childhood experiences unrelated to attachment and did not differ on memory measures (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 1993).

All transcripts were classified by the third author, who received a thorough training in the AAI coding using Main and Goldwyn's system by Patricia Crittenden Ph.D. (Family Relations Institute). Inter-rater reliability for the three-category classification was established on 20% of the interviews and reached 82% agreement ( $Kappa = .72$ ). Classification in either one of the two insecure categories was the most



frequent source of disagreement between coders. Misclassifications were discussed to achieve consensus.

*Conflict discussion.* Conflict resolution discussions were coded using the Mother-Adolescent Conflict Resolution Interaction System (MACRIS; Dubé, & Julien, 1997), an adapted version of the Interactional Dimensions Coding System (IDCS; Julien, Markman & Lindhal, 1989). Several studies have used the IDCS with heterosexual couples and have demonstrated good reliability, good concurrent validity with microscopic coding, and good predictive validity of dyadic outcomes (for a review, see Kline et al., 2004). The adapted version for mother-adolescent conflict (MACRIS) has been used in a study of the link between marital relationship and mother-adolescent relationship (Dubé et al, 2001). This system contains individual and dyadic dimensions assessing verbal and non-verbal characteristics of problem solving communication. Positive individual dimensions include *communication skills*, *validation*, and *problem solving skills*; negative individual dimensions include *withdrawal*, *conflict behavior* and *negative affect*. Finally, dyadic dimensions are *relational synchrony*, *negative escalation*, *control*, and *opposition*.

Coders assign a score to each dimension using a 9-point scale (1- Very low, to 5- Moderate, to 9- Very high). The score is based on the quality, intensity and frequency of behaviors defining each dimension. A team of three independent coders, blind to the attachment classification of participants, and also blind to other coding results (shared activity discussion and best friend discussion) assessed the discussions following a 50-hour training session. First, they observed the interaction to get a general idea of the discussion. Then, mothers' behaviors were rated, followed by adolescents' behaviors, and dyadic dimensions.

Twenty-five percent of the interactions were used for inter-rater agreement. Intraclass correlations for each dimension ranged from .62 to .93, except for Problem solving skills. This dimension was excluded from the analyses.

*Shared activity discussion.* Discussions about a shared activity were coded using the Mother-Adolescent Relation Observation System (MAROS; Simard, Julien, & Pilon, 2002). This system was created using attachment theory concepts as a guiding framework. The system includes dimensions assessing the verbal content of the discussions, and dimensions assessing the discussion process (non-verbal behaviors) (see appendix 1). Raters assign a score to each dimension using a 9-point scale (1- Very low, to 5- Moderate, to 9- Very high), based on the quality, intensity and frequency of behaviors defining each dimension. Two independent raters blind to the attachment classification of participants and also blind to other coding results (conflict discussion and best friend discussion) assessed the discussions. First, they observed the interaction to get a general idea of the discussion. Then, mothers' behaviors were rated, followed by adolescents' behaviors, then by dyadic dimensions.

Twenty percent of the interactions were used for inter-rater agreement, using intra-class correlations between the two coders' scores. Because the scores for validation, self-validation, and negative affect were not normally distributed (more than 50% of the ratings were 1 or 2), these three dimensions were dichotomized (presence/absence of the behavior) and percentages of agreement between coders were used. Agreements ranged from .73 to .92 for the continuous dimensions, and from .75 to .88. for the dichotomous dimensions.

## *Time 2*

*Quality of daughter-best friend communication.* Communication behaviors in the social support task were coded using the Social Support Interaction Global Coding System (Système de codification d'interactions de soutien, SCIS; Pizzamiglio, Julien, & Parent, 1991). This system was used in a study which assessed support communication between spouses (Julien, Chartrand, Simard, Bouthillier, & Bégin, 2003). It is composed of two negative dimensions (*counter-validation* and *withdrawal*), and five positive dimensions (*attention while listening*, *expressiveness*, *support/validation*, and *solution*

*proposals*). The SCIS also comprises a positive dyadic dimension, *interactional synchrony*, assessing the dyad as an interactive unit. Trained raters used behavioral cues to assess each participant on each individual dimension and to assess the dyad on the dyadic dimension, using a 9-point scale (1- Very low, to 5- Moderate, to 9- Very high). Three independent graduate students, blind to mothers' attachment classification and also blind to other coding results (shared activity discussion and conflict discussion) coded the interactions following a 50-hour training session. Blind inter-rater agreements were computed weekly on 25% of the interactions. For each dimension, intra-class correlation coefficients varied between .58 and .85. The counter-validation dimension was excluded from analyses due to low score variability.

#### *Data reduction*

*Time 1.* Because of high correlations among the dimensions of the Mother-Adolescent Conflict Resolution System and between mothers' and adolescents' scores, a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to reduce the data. The analysis yielded three factors (Table 1), accounting for 80.09% of the variance: *Negative conflict behavior*, *Adolescents' involvement in conflict resolution* and *Mothers' withdrawal from conflict resolution*. Factorial scores were used in subsequent analyses.

Similarly, because of high correlations among the dimensions of the MAROS and between the adolescents' and mothers' scores, a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to reduce the data. The analysis yielded four factors (Table 2), accounting for 63.95% of the variance: *Positive involvement in the discussion*, *Negative behavior*, *Relationship validation* and *Neutral description of shared activity*. Factorial scores were used in subsequent analyses. Table 3 presents the intercorrelations among the factors for the two discussions.

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Insert Table 1, 2 and 3 about here

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*Time 2.* Because of high correlations among the SCIS dimensions during the daughter-best friend discussion, a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was attempted but no satisfactory solution was reached. In order to reduce the data, Cronbach's coefficients were then computed between all dimensions, in both interactions and roles (helpee and helper) using the item-total correlation procedure. This technique consists of eliminating, one at a time, dimensions that lower Cronbach alpha coefficient. Given that three series of analyses out of four showed that combinations of *attention*, *withdrawal* (negative) and *expressiveness* dimensions resulted in higher Cronbach alphas, we computed composite scores made of the three dimensions, for each role. The new variable was called *other mobilization* and the Cronbach coefficients varied between .73 and .86. Because the *support/validation* and *solution proposal* dimensions were poorly correlated, they were used as separate variables in the analyses. The dyadic dimension *interactional synchrony* was also used separately because it measured a construct involving the two participants together..

Cronbach's coefficients computed between the four scores (2 roles, 2 interactions) for each new variable (e.g., alpha for the 4 *other mobilization* scores) indicated high internal coherence between daughters' and friends' respective scores on *other mobilization* ( $\alpha = .67$ ). Thus, the four scores were averaged. A similar procedure was used with *support/validation* ( $\alpha = .67$ ). Cronbach's alpha for the four solution proposal scores was low ( $\alpha = .35$ ). However, there were high correlations between the two *solution proposal* scores in the two roles within each discussion. Thus, these scores were averaged, creating one *solution proposal* score for interaction 1 and one *solution proposal* score for interaction 2. Finally, the two *interactional synchrony* scores were weakly correlated and were not transformed. To sum up, data reduction resulted in six behavior variables at Time 2: *other mobilization*, *support/validation*, *solution proposal* (interaction 1), *solution proposal* (interaction 2), *interactional synchrony* (daughter helpee) and *interactional synchrony* (daughter helper).

## Results

### *Classification of Internal Working Models of Attachment*

At time 1, the distribution of mothers' AAI classification was as follows: 24 mothers were classified as secure (60%), 7 were classified as insecure-dismissing (18%), and 9 were classified as insecure-preoccupied (23%). This distribution is comparable to distributions found in normative samples (van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1996). Preliminary analyses showed no significant differences in mothers' age, level of income and education, and in adolescents' age as a function of mothers' attachment classification.

### *Associations between Mothers IWM at Time 1 and Mother-Adolescent Communication at Time 1*

Preliminary correlation analyses showed that adolescents' age at Time 1 was significantly correlated with some mother-adolescent communication factors. Adolescents' age was therefore taken into account in subsequent analyses. We created a dichotomic variable for adolescent age (below or above the mean of 14.9 years) which was included in subsequent analyses. The group of younger adolescents was composed of 20 adolescents (range 11.1 to 14.8 years old) and the group of older adolescents was composed of 22 adolescents (range 15.1 to 17.3 years old).

In order to assess whether mothers' attachment classification was associated with mother-adolescent communication, a series of univariate analyses of variance was performed using a 3 (mother IWM) X 2 (adolescent age) factorial design with communication factors as dependent variables. The dependent variables were analyzed separately because of weak correlations between the factors in the two tasks (Table 3), and because there were no correlations among the factors within each task (they were orthogonal factors). Table 4 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for each factor as a function of mothers' attachment classification.

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Insert table 4

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For *involvement in conflict resolution* in the conflict discussion task, there was an age main effect: older adolescents expressed higher levels of *involvement in conflict resolution*,  $F(1,38) = 6.66$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$  (for younger adolescents:  $M = -.26$ ,  $S.D. = 1.09$ , and for older adolescents:  $M = .16$ ,  $S.D. = .92$ ). There was also a IWM main effect,  $F(2, 38) = 4.83$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .23$ . As predicted, adolescents of secure mothers expressed higher levels of involvement in conflict resolution than adolescents of preoccupied mothers, Tukey post hoc,  $p < .05$ . There was no interaction effect. For levels of *negative conflict behavior*, and levels of *mothers' withdrawal from conflict resolution*, there were no main effects and no interaction effects.

For *positive involvement* in the shared activities discussion, there was no age main effect, but a mother IWM main effect,  $F(2, 39) = 5.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .25$ . As predicted, secure mothers and their daughters expressed higher levels of *positive involvement* than preoccupied mothers and their daughters, Tukey post hoc,  $p < .05$ . There were no interaction effects.

For *relationship validation*, there was an age main effect: older adolescents displayed higher levels of *relationship validation*,  $F(1, 39) = 7.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .18$  (for younger adolescents:  $M = -.29$ ,  $S.D. = .79$ , and for older adolescents:  $M = .30$ ,  $S.D. = 1.09$ ). There was also a mother IWM marginally significant effect,  $F(2, 39) = 2.66$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta^2 = .14$ . As predicted, secure mothers and their daughters tended to express higher levels of *relationship validation* than preoccupied mothers and their daughters, Tukey post hoc,  $p < .10$ . There was no interaction effect.

For *negative behavior* in the shared activity discussion, there was no age main effect, but a mothers IWM marginally significant main effect,  $F(2, 39) = 2.98$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta^2 = .15$ . Dismissing mothers and their adolescent tended to display higher levels of

negative behaviors than did secure mothers and their adolescent, Tukey post hoc  $p < .05$ . There was no interaction effect.

Finally, for *neutral description of activity*, there was an age main effect: older adolescents showed higher levels of *neutral description of activity*,  $F(1, 39) = 6.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .15$  (for younger adolescents:  $M = -.30$ ,  $S.D. = 1.12$ , and for older adolescents:  $M = .17$ ,  $S.D. = .86$ ). There was no IWM main effect. There was a significant interaction effect,  $F(2, 39) = 4.62$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .21$ : mothers IWM effect on *neutral description of activity* was observed only for younger adolescents,  $F(2, 18) = 4.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .35$ . Among younger adolescents, levels of *neutral description of activity* were higher in secure mothers' discussions than in dismissing mothers' discussions, whereas for older adolescents, levels of neutral description did not differ for the two groups of mothers. Tukey post hoc,  $p < .05$ , for younger adolescents: secure mothers mean = .23 ( $S.D. = .97$ ) and dismissing mothers mean = -1.44, ( $S.D. = .54$ ); for older adolescents: secure mothers mean = -.04 ( $S.D. = .87$ ) and dismissing mothers mean = .69 ( $S.D. = .71$ ).

#### *Associations between Mothers IWM at Time 1 and Daughter-Best friend Communication at Time 2*

In order to examine the association between mothers IWM on adult daughters' communication with their best friend, univariate analyses of variance were performed with mothers IWM as a between group independent variable and the six daughter-friend communication variables as dependent variables. Preliminary correlation analyses showed no associations between young adults' age and their communication behaviors. Table 5 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for each behavior variable as a function of mothers' attachment status.

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Insert table 5

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Results showed that there was a significant effect of mothers' IWM on levels of *synchrony* in one of the tasks,  $F(2, 28) = 3.67$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .21$ . In the context of discussions occurring when daughters were in the helper role, daughters of dismissing mothers displayed lower levels of synchrony than did daughters of secure mothers, Tukey post hoc,  $p < .05$ . No other differences were found.

*Mother-adolescent communication as mediator or moderator of the link between mother IWM and daughter social support conversation*

Analyses showed no mediation effect of mother-adolescent communication behaviors for the associations between mothers' IWM and quality of daughters-friends communication. Therefore, we examined the moderation hypothesis. In order to verify whether Time 1 mother-adolescent communication moderated Time 2 associations between mothers' IWM and quality of daughter-friend communication, we used a 3 (mothers' IWM) X 2 (mother-adolescent communication factor valence) analyses of variance with the daughters-friends communication variables as dependent variables. Because mother-adolescent discussions were represented by factorial scores, we were able to use the score valences to dichotomize the variables (high/low). As Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested, we used only moderator variables that were uncorrelated with mothers' IWM or daughters-friends communication variables. Correlations between dichotomized Time 1 variables and daughters-friends communication variables indicated no significant correlations. We did not use *positive involvement*, *relationship validation*, *negative behaviors*, *neutral description of the activity* and *adolescents' involvement in conflict resolution* because they were associated with mothers' IWM in our first analyses.

Two series of moderation tests were performed using successively two moderators (high/low): *negative conflict behavior* and *mothers' withdrawal from conflict resolution*. For the analyses, the independent variable was mothers' attachment classification (secure, dismissing, preoccupied). Moderation tests were performed with daughters-friends communication variables as dependant variables.



For synchrony, findings indicated a significant interaction effect between mothers IWM and *negative conflict behavior*,  $F(2, 30) = 4.29$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .26$ , a significant main effect of mothers IWM,  $F(2, 30) = 3.31$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .22$  and no main effect of *negative conflict behavior*. For Time 1 low levels of *negative conflict behavior*, there was no main effect of mothers IWM on daughter-friend synchrony,  $F(2, 17) = 0.785$ , n.s., whereas for Time 1 high levels of *negative conflict behavior*, there was a strong effect of mothers' IWM on daughter-friend synchrony,  $F(2, 11) = 9.177$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .67$ . In the context of both mothers and daughters expressing high levels of negative behaviors during adolescence, daughters of dismissing mothers had interactions with friends that were lower in synchrony than those of all the other daughters.

For validation, findings indicated a marginally significant interaction effect between mothers IWM and *mothers' withdrawal*,  $F(2, 30) = 3.74$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta^2 = .15$ , no main effect of mothers IWM, and no main effect of *mothers' withdrawal*. For Time 1 low levels of *mothers' withdrawal*, there was no main effect of mothers IWM on daughters-friends validation  $F(2, 17) = 0.26$ , n.s., whereas for Time 1 high levels of *mothers' withdrawal*, there was a significant effect of mothers IWM on daughters-friends validation,  $F(1, 8) = 5.86$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .42$ . In the context of mothers expressing high levels of withdrawal in conflict discussion during adolescence, daughters of dismissing mothers had interactions with friends that were lower in validation than those of all the other daughters.

No other significant results were found.

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## Figures 1 and 2

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## Discussion

The current study examined the links between mothers' IWMs of attachment and quality of daughters' communication during adolescence and adulthood. It was expected

that secure mothers and their daughters, as compared with insecure mothers and their daughters, would show more positive communication.

The first objective of the study was to examine the links between mothers' IWMs and behaviors during a mother-adolescent conflict discussion. As expected, during conflict discussions, adolescents whose mothers were secure were more involved in conflict resolution. They showed more positive behaviors, such as communication skills and validation behaviors, and were less withdrawn than daughters of preoccupied mothers (ie maintained proximity with their mothers even during disagreements). These results are consistent with previous findings showing a link between security of attachment in adolescence and better conflict resolution skills, which showed that secure adolescents were more assertive, adopt more non-verbal communication of positive affect, and were less angry and withdrawn than insecure adolescents (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies & Fleming, 1993; Becker-Stoll, Delius, & Scheitenberge, 2001). The results are also coherent with attachment theory which suggests that secure relationships should be characterized by open, fluent and coherent discourse both within the relationship and about the relationship; attachment theory also suggests that discourse about sensitive issues (especially those surrounding negative emotions) is likely to be both more frequent and more coherent between securely attached children and their mothers (Bretherton; 1990).

The second objective of this study was to examine the links between mothers' IWMs and communication with adolescent daughters in the context of mother-adolescent discussions about shared activities, a positive aspect of their relationship. Findings similar to the conflict task results were observed during discussions of shared activities: Secure mothers and their adolescents displayed higher levels of positive involvement than did preoccupied mothers and their adolescents, and they expressed higher levels of relationship validation. Secure mothers were more attuned to daughters, as evidenced by higher levels of engagement in listening behaviors and by higher levels of positive affect

in response to daughters' appreciations of shared activities. Adolescents of secure mothers also displayed higher levels of positive affect and behavioral involvement. Furthermore, secure mothers and their younger adolescents, relative to insecure mothers and their younger adolescents, had more elaborated discussions as shown by high levels of details about shared activities and fewer attempts by mothers to present themselves in a favorable light. Indeed, independently of the length of their discussions, younger adolescents whose mothers were secure were more likely to engage in elaborated discourse. These findings are consistent with attachment theory that describes secure/autonomous individuals as valuing attachment relationships and reflecting on them with consistency and coherency, and with empirical results linking security of attachment in children to more elaborative and coherent mother-child discourse (Laible, 2004). They are also in line with the findings of Allen & Hauser (1996) who showed that mothers promoting relatedness with their adolescents as well as autonomy was associated with security of attachment in adulthood.

By contrast, dismissing mothers and daughters, relative to secure ones, tended to display higher levels of negative behaviors when communicating about shared activities. This finding is consistent with attachment theory that describes dismissing individuals as denying the influence of attachment relationships on their emotional development. It is also in line with Kobak et al.'s (1993) interpretation that it may be more difficult for dismissing mothers to handle situations in which their adolescents have to rely on them. Dismissing mothers may find it uncomfortable to acknowledge the intimacy they share with their daughters and prefer to rely on authority and control over their relationship with their daughter. As a consequence, daughters of dismissing mothers may react by displaying negative affect and invalidating their mothers' communication. This result seems to contradict attachment theory proposition that dismissing individuals deactivate negative emotions to maintain proximity to caregivers. However, the theory further specifies that difficulties to acknowledge and express vulnerability characterize

dismissing individuals because they fear this would lead to rejection. In our study, negative behaviors were rather control and invalidation behaviors characteristic of a dismissing state of mind which uses rejection and control when attachment system is activated.

For their part, preoccupied mothers and their adolescents were characterized by low levels of involvement in both discussions. On the one hand, preoccupied mothers discussions about shared activities with their daughters indicated low positive affect and behavioral involvement of the part of both partners, little dyadic synchrony, and low levels of listening in mothers. Preoccupied mothers had difficulties to be attuned to their daughters to contribute constructing a relaxed and comfortable interaction. Our findings are coherent with previous results showing that preoccupied mothers, when compared to other mothers, expressed more anxiety and more attention to their own emotional reactions, whereas their adolescents showed less autonomy (Kobak, Ferenz-Gillies, Everhart, & Seabrook, 1994). On the other hand, during conflict discussions, adolescent daughters of preoccupied mothers were less involved in conflict resolution, showed poor communication skills and support, tended to withdraw – resulting in low synchronization with mothers. It is possible that daughters of preoccupied mothers, used over the years to interact with anxious and inconsistent mothers, expected little from mothers and withdrew from the interaction. This result is also in line with Allen & Hauser's (1996) findings showing that adolescents' behaviors that inhibited autonomy and relatedness with their parents predicted passivity of thought processes during AAI in adulthood, which is an indication of preoccupation.

Beyond mothers' IWM effects, our study showed an age effect on behaviors in mother-adolescent discussions. Older adolescents, over fifteen years of age, showed higher levels of *involvement in conflict resolution*, and showed higher levels of *relationship validation*, and *neutral description of activity* during the discussion about shared activities. Indeed, older adolescents displayed higher communication skills, and

their discussions with their mothers were higher in positive behaviors. Furthermore, the same communications skills that were higher for older adolescents were also higher in the discussion of secure mothers. These findings suggested that secure mothers promote maturity in their adolescents.

The finding that mothers' IWMs influenced communication in a positive context as well as in a conflict context points to the importance of the attachment system on several dimensions of family relationships. Our study was the first to document the association between mothers' IWM and quality of communication with adolescent daughters when discussing shared activities, suggesting that beyond childhood, mothers' IWM contributed to influence positive communication with their daughters. The proportion of behaviors linked with mothers' security of attachment was even higher during mother-daughter discussion about shared activities than during conflict discussions. Furthermore, behaviors in conflict discussions no longer differentiated between mothers' IWM for adolescents over fifteen years old, whereas behaviors in the discussions about shared activities did. Indeed, more than contributing to conflict resolution skills in their adolescent daughter, security of attachment in mothers fosters their daughter quality of emotional and cognitive implication in positive discussions. These findings contributed to highlight the importance of mothers' IWM in mother-adolescent co-constructions of conversation about positive aspects of attachment relationships and pointed to the pertinence of studying many aspects of family communication to document the influence of mothers' IWM on quality of family relationships.

A third objective of the current study was to assess longitudinally the impact of mothers' IWM on their adult daughters' communication with their best friend. Our findings showed that young adults who benefited from a secure mother in their adolescence, as compared to daughters of dismissing mothers, were more attuned to their

friends' disclosure of personal problems 5 years later, as shown by higher levels of synchrony during the interaction.

One of the most interesting contributions of this study was to show that young adults who had a dismissing mother during their adolescence and who also experienced high conflict in communication with their mother or high levels of mother withdrawal from conflict discussion showed less ability to synchronize with friends who disclosed personal problems and to validate their friend discourse. It is possible that because they were not exposed to a positive model of emotional support in their adolescence, they were more likely to have been left unprepared to provide themselves emotional support. These results are consistent with attachment theory, which proposes that attachment relationship with caregiver represents the basis for the development of future intimate relationships. However, our findings specified the conditions under which having a dismissing mother during adolescence may create vulnerability for adult communication with intimate network. Our findings on the moderating effect of past experience of conflictual communication with mothers is in line with those of Adam, Gunnar and Tanaka (2004) who showed that dismissing attachment in mothers becomes a predictor of lower warmth/responsiveness only when it is combined with significant levels of mothers negative affect.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings. Our small sample size constrained generalization of our findings and thus replication would be needed. Another limitation of the study is its focus on mother-daughter dyads. A replication of this study could include other dyads such as father-daughter, father-son or mother-son in order to examine whether gender moderates the associations we found. Also, it would be interesting to assess the impact of mothers IWM on adult daughters who are in their late 20's. In the current study, the mean age of the participants was 20.35 years. The majority still lived with their parents, and only 15% lived with their romantic partner. Leaving family and having a conjugal relationship can provide new relationships experiences and

model, and can be an occasion of acquiring new relational skills, or by contrast, can lead to more negative expectations about relationships. Evaluating relationship quality of adults in their late 20s, with more experience with intimate relationships outside the family of origin, can allow us to know whether the impact of mothers IWM on the quality of their intimate relationship would persist. Indeed, our results highlight a development trend in which mothers IWM has a stronger impact on communication with younger adolescents than on older adolescents. It would also be interesting to examine the influence of mothers IWM on young adults' quality of other intimate relationship than friendship. Indeed, some studies have shown that mother-adolescent communication influence young adults satisfaction with their romantic partner (Baril, Julien, Chartrand et al., in press).

Overall, our findings replicated and extended previous findings on the associations between attachment system and communication. Interestingly, secure mothers and their daughters, independently of contexts or levels of negative behaviors otherwise expressed, displayed generally higher levels of positive behaviors. Thus, behaviors that strongly related to mothers attachment IWM were positive behaviors expressed in both a negative (conflict) and a positive interaction context. Negative behaviors related to attachment security only in the context of dismissing attachment: they may contribute to the negative impact of low emotional support believed to be characteristic of dismissing attachment relationships. These results are consistent with others studies linking adults IWM to positive communication behaviors in negative contexts. For example, in marital conflict discussion, secure men were more supportive and more self-disclosing, and secure women displayed more supportive behaviors than did insecure men and women (Bouthillier, Julien, Dubé, Bélanger, & Hamelin, 2002).

Our finding that mothers IWM influences the quality of mother-adolescent communication and of friendship communication in adulthood has important clinical implications given that social support and the ability to mobilize one's social network

facilitates individual adaptation when exposed to life difficulties.



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Table 1

*Principal Component Analysis on the MACRIS Dimensions*


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	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
	Negative conflict	Adolescents' involvement	Mothers' withdrawal
	behavior	in conflict resolution	from
			conflict resolution
Opposition	<b>.95</b>	-.02	.07
Adolescent conflict behavior	<b>.90</b>	-.17	.21
Negative escalation	<b>.89</b>	.03	.05
Mother conflict behavior	<b>.87</b>	-.09	.30
Adolescent's negative affect	<b>.83</b>	-.38	.17
Mother' negative affect	<b>.80</b>	-.15	.44
Control	<b>.53</b>	-.45	.08
Adolescent communication skills	.06	<b>.94</b>	-.18
Adolescent withdrawal	.02	<b>-.90</b>	.21
Relational synchrony	-.27	<b>.86</b>	-.14
Adolescent validation behavior	-.34	<b>.73</b>	-.38
Mother' communication skills	.00	.30	<b>-.79</b>
Mother withdrawal	.43	-.08	<b>.75</b>
Mother validation behavior	-.27	.31	<b>-.75</b>

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Table 2

*Principal Component Analysis on the MAROS Dimensions*

	Factor 1:	Factor 2:	Factor 3:	Factor 4:
	Positive involvement	Negative behavior	Relationship validation	Neutral description
Mother behavioral involvement	<b>.90</b>	-.05	.07	-.08
Relational Synchrony (dyad)	<b>.85</b>	-.12	.10	.06
Mother positive affect	<b>.80</b>	-.14	.09	.11
Adolescent positive affect	<b>.77</b>	-.35	.14	.20
Adolescent' behavioral involvement	<b>.72</b>	-.25	.14	.24
Mother listening behavior	<b>.56</b>	-.45	.09	.35
Mother validation behavior	.41	.27	.14	.07
Adolescent listening behavior	.39	-.31	.28	.33
Adolescent invalidating	-.10	<b>.84</b>	-.04	.07
Mother invalidating	-.11	<b>.84</b>	-.22	-.11
Adolescent negative affect	-.14	<b>.78</b>	-.03	.00
Mother negative affect	-.13	<b>.76</b>	-.13	.10

Table 2 continued

Table 2

*Principal Component Analysis on the MAROS Dimensions*

	Factor 1:	Factor 2:	Factor 3:	Factor 4:
	Positive involvement	Negative behavior	Relationship validation	Neutral description
Authority/Control (mother)	-.14	<b>.68</b>	-.41	-.34
Focus (dyad)	.35	-.40	.26	.15
Adolescent validation behavior	.17	.07	<b>.78</b>	.14
Adolescent relational reference	.33	-.19	<b>.75</b>	-.03
Requests (mother)	.18	.31	<b>-.63</b>	.15
Mother relational reference	.40	-.33	<b>.59</b>	.11
Self-validation (mother)	.14	-.15	-.03	<b>-.82</b>
Adolescent' descriptive discourse	.28	-.14	-.12	<b>.77</b>
Mother descriptive discourse	.28	-.03	.13	<b>.68</b>



Table 3

*Intercorrelations Between the Factorial Scores of the MAROS and the MACRIS*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Shared activity discussion (MAROS)						
1. Positive involvement						
2. Negative behavior	.00					
3. Relationship validation	.00	.00				
4. Neutral description of the activity	.00	.00	.00			
Conflict discussion (MACRIS)						
5. Negative conflict behavior	-.11	.37*	.13	.33*		
6. Adolescent involvement in conflict resolution	.31*	-.22	.38*	.16	.00	
7. Mother withdrawal from conflict resolution	-.22	.12	-.12	.04	.00	.00

\*  $p < .05$

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations of Time 1 Factorial Scores as a Function of Mothers IWM*

Mothers IWM	Discussion about a positive aspect of the relationship				Discussion about a conflict in the relationship		
	Positive	Negative	Relationship	Neutral	Negative	Adolescents'	Mothers'
	involvement	behavior	validation	description	behavior	involvement	withdrawal
	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>
Secure ( <u>n</u> =24)	.33 (0.79)	-.19 (0.90)	.18 (1.07)	.10 (0.91)	.01 (0.95)	.27 (0.85)	-.20 (0.88)
Dismissing ( <u>n</u> =7)	-.44 (0.91)	.80 (1.23)	.07 (1.10)	-.53 (1.27)	.21 (1.35)	-.35 (1.15)	.30 (0.83)
Preoccupied ( <u>n</u> =9)	-.72 (1.19)	-.08 (0.98)	-.59 (0.59)	.10 (1.09)	-.15 (0.95)	-.66 (1.08)	.32 (1.49)
Total ( <u>n</u> =40 <sup>a</sup> )	-.04 (1.00)	.01 (1.02)	-.01 (1.02)	-.01 (1.02)	.01 (1.01)	-.03 (1.01)	-.01 (1.02)

<sup>a</sup> One of the dyad, in which the mother was classified as preoccupied, did not participate in the conflict discussion.

Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations of Time 2 Behavioral Dimensions as a Function of the Mothers IWM*

Mothers IWM	Other mobilization	Support/ Validation	Solution proposal (daughter helpee)	Solution proposal (daughter helper)	Interactional synchrony (daughter helpee)	Interactional synchrony (daughter helper)
	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>	<u>M (S.D.)</u>
Secure ( <i>n</i> =20)	6.56 (.73)	4.13 (1.40)	3.05 (1.13)	2.75 (1.25)	6.70 (1.30)	6.80 (1.20)
Dismissing ( <i>n</i> =5)	6.00 (.69)	3.40 (1.43)	2.80 (1.64)	2.70 (1.25)	7.60 (1.14)	5.20 (1.30)
Preoccupied ( <i>n</i> =6)	6.06 (.77)	4.13 (0.79)	2.75 (0.61)	2.42 (1.07)	6.33 (1.37)	6.17 (1.17)
Total ( <i>n</i> =31)	6.37 (.75)	4.01 (1.30)	2.95 (1.12)	2.68 (1.19)	6.77 (1.31)	6.42 (1.31)

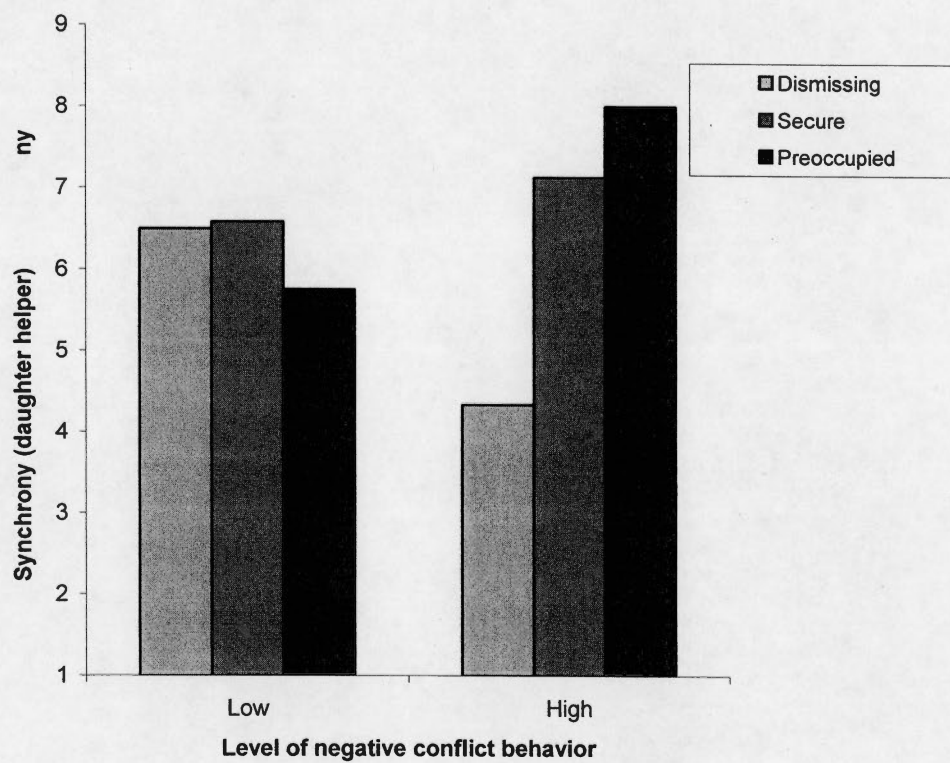


Figure 1. Levels of synchrony in daughter-helper discussions as a function of mothers' IWM and levels of negative conflict behavior in mother-adolescent discussion

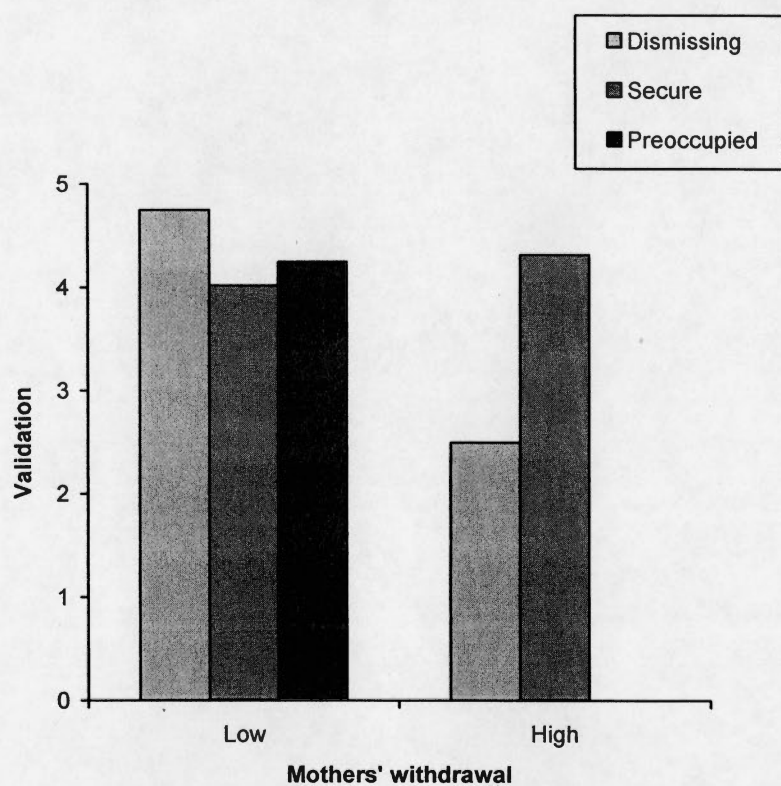


Figure 2. Levels of validation in daughter-friend discussion as a function of mothers IWM and levels of mothers' withdrawal in mother-adolescent conflict discussion

## Appendix 1:

Dimensions of the Mother-Adolescent Relationship Observation System (MAROS)

Dimensions	Applied to...	Description
<u>Verbal content</u>		
Relational reference	Both mother and adolescent	Positive references about the relationship, about positive aspects of being together, mentions of the uniqueness, exclusivity, specificity of the relationship
Descriptive discourse	Both mother and adolescent	Neutral details about the shared activity, reasons to appreciate it
Validation	Both mother and adolescent	Compliments, support, empathy
Requests	Mother only	Question facilitating discussion
Invalidating	Both mother and adolescent	Criticisms, disagreement
Authority/Control	Mother only	Manifestations of authority/ power, attempts to control behavior, infantilizing attitude
Self-validation	Mother only	Attempts to present herself in a favorable light (e.g.enumerating her qualities, things she does for her daughter, money spent for her)

Appendix continued

Communication process - nonverbal

Listening behavior	Both mother and adolescent	Back channels, gaze
Behavioral involvement	Both mother and adolescent	Use of gestures, gaze and body oriented toward the other, animated voice, facial expressions
Positive affect	Both mother and adolescent	Facial expressions and voice showing joy, affection; smiles, laughing
Negative affect	Both mother and adolescent	Facial expressions and voice showing anger, sadness, contempt

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Dyadic dimensions

Relational synchrony	Dyad	Coincidence between the various timings of activities of one partner with the timings of the activities of the other partner, balance of partners participation in alternating turns and in penetrating turns via various back-channel strategies (e.g., verbal and nonverbal filling of partners' pauses, sentence completion, and echo), pace of the exchange
Focus	Dyad	Extend to which the discussion stays on the same topic

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## CHAPITRE 2

### ARTICLE 2



Running head: PREDICTORS OF IWM AND DISTRESS

Quality of Mother-Daughter Relationship in Adolescence,  
and Models of Attachment and Psychological Distress in Adulthood

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### Abstract

This study examined a) the association between quality of mother-daughter relationship in adolescence and young women psychological distress in adulthood, and b) whether young women internal working model of attachment (IWM) and intimacy with their mother in adulthood mediate the link between quality of mother-daughter relationship during adolescence and psychological distress in adulthood. Thirty-two young women participated in this longitudinal study. At time 1, questionnaires and direct observation of communication skills were used to assess the quality of mother-adolescent relationship. At time 2, IWM was measured with the Adult Attachment Projective (AAP) (George, West & Pettem, 1999), and intimacy with mother and psychological distress were evaluated with questionnaires. Results showed that a) higher levels of perceived negativity in mother-adolescent relationship were associated with higher levels of psychological distress in young adulthood; b) higher levels of perceived negativity in mother-adolescent relationship predicted young adults' classification within preoccupied or dismissing IWM and young adults' intimacy with mother; c) higher levels of negative behaviors during mother-adolescent discussions predicted classification within preoccupied or secure IWM. IWM did not mediate these associations. However, perceived intimacy with mother in adulthood mediated the association between perceived negativity in adolescence and psychological distress in adulthood. Implications of mother-adolescent relationship quality for the development of young adults IWM and mental health are discussed.

## Quality of Mother-Daughter Relationship in Adolescence, and Models of Attachment and Psychological Distress in Adulthood

Research has showed empirical evidence that the quality of parent-child relationship during adolescence is associated with psychological outcomes in adulthood (e.g. Eberhart & Hammen, 2006; Shulman & Ben-Artzi, 2003 ). In western and industrialized countries, the late teens and early twenties (ages 18-25) represent a period of frequent changes and exploration that have been identified as *emerging adulthood* (Arnett, 2000). This period is characterized by instability and intensive exploration of identity. In that process, relationship with parents evolves to achieve a state of autonomy and relatedness. On the one hand, during the transition to young adulthood, young women past and current relationship with mother can influence internal resources because it has been internalized in a working model of attachment over the years. On the other hand, relationship with their mothers in adulthood can be an external resource, because it provides emotional support. Thus, past and current relationship with attachment figures during this period of life can impact young adults' psychological adaptation. For instance, insecure attachment cognitions marked by fear of abandonment and unsupportive relationships with family members have been found to predict depressive symptoms in young women in their early 20s (Eberhart and Hammen, 2006).

Yet, less attention has been devoted to current family variables likely to account for the association between past relationship with parents and psychological distress during adulthood. In a study of college students, parental attachment was shown to mediate the relationship between family dysfunction and interpersonal distress: participants reporting higher levels of family dysfunction were likely to report poorer parental attachment, and those reporting poorer parental attachment had greater levels of interpersonal distress (Mothersead, Kivlighan, & Wynkoop, 1998). However, the latter study measured quality of relationship with parents and attachment to parents by questionnaire and retrospective report of family history of adverse events. Furthermore,

there were no evaluation of the communication behaviors between parents and adolescents.

The goal of the present study was to examine longitudinally whether young adults' internal working model of attachment, as assessed by projective testing, and perceived intimacy with mothers in adulthood mediated the links between quality of mother-adolescent relationship (observed and perceived) in adolescence and young adults' psychological distress.

#### *Quality of mother-adolescent communication and IWM*

Studies using concurrent measures of family communication and adolescents' attachment reported strong associations between positive communication skills and security of attachment in adolescence. For instance, during conflict resolution, levels of assertiveness in teens and mothers were more equal in secure than in insecure teens' discussions (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, & Fleming, 1993), and observed relatedness were positively associated with a secure IWM in adolescence (Allen et al. 2003). Similarly, higher levels of joy, smiles, conversational signals, and glances towards the mothers were found for secure teens relative to the other teens (Becker-Stoll, Delius, & Scheitenberge, 2001). Conversely, negative behaviors were associated with insecure IWMs: higher levels of dysfunctional anger and task avoidance were found in insecure adolescents' conflict discussions with their mothers (Kobak, and al., 1993); and higher levels of maternal dominance (Kobak et al., 1993), as well as higher levels of sadness and withdrawal (Becker-Stoll, et al., 2001), were found for dismissing adolescents' discussions. Finally, higher levels of anger were found in the discussions of preoccupied teens (Becker-Stoll, et al., 2001). These findings raise the question of the long term impact of mother-adolescent communication on adult daughters' IWM.

Using a longitudinal design, Allen and Hauser (1996) predicted young adults' IWM from early parent-adolescent discussions in which family members (mother, father, and adolescent) expressed their respective opinions and discussed disagreements about

hypothetical moral dilemmas. The findings showed that maternal behaviors promoting teenagers' relatedness and autonomy predicted young adults' AAI coherency of mind (an indication of secure attachment) 11 years later. Also, adolescents' behaviors that inhibited autonomy and relatedness with their parents predicted passivity of thought processes (an indication of preoccupation) during AAI 11 years later.

The above studies focused primarily on conflict resolution, because parents' and adolescents' competing goals lead to more frequent conflict during the teenage years (George & Solomon, 1999), and because theory predicts that conflict activates the attachment system. Yet, mother-adolescent communication in other contexts may also affect the development of adult IWM. With younger children, neutral discussions representative of daily conversations between mothers and children have been found to differentiate children's IWM. In a study asking mothers of preschool children to select and discuss unique events experienced by children in their lifetime, secure children and their mothers were more likely to emphasize the evaluative and emotional aspects of everyday events, and more likely to display consistent and collaborative narrative style than insecure children and their mothers (Newcombe & Reese, 2003, 2004). Similarly, mothers of secure children, as compared to mothers of insecure children, were more likely to adopt an emotionally open, elaborative, and coherent discourse when talking about relational issues (Laible, 2004).

The first objective of this study was to use both a conflict resolution discussion and a positive topic discussion to evaluate the association between communication with mother during adolescence and young adults' IWM. It was expected that higher levels of conflict resolution skills and positive involvement, as well as lower levels of negative behaviors during adolescence, would discriminate between secure and insecure IWMs in adulthood.

*Mother-Adolescent Perceived Relationship Quality and Adult IWM*

IWM assessments with the Adult Attachment Interview describe that *secure-autonomous* adults integrate positive and negative aspects of their experiences with attachment figures during childhood with consistency and coherency, whereas dismissing adults fail to report specific memories supporting positive descriptions of caregivers, and preoccupied adults intensify negative experiences and emotions with attachment figures (Hesse, 1999). Adolescents' perception of parent-adolescent relationship quality also discriminated adolescents IWMs. For instance, adolescents' reports of caregiver's supportiveness and adolescents' deidealization of mothers were positively associated with levels of attachment security in adolescence as assessed by the AAI rated with a Q-sort (Allen et al, 2003). Also, preoccupied young adults reported that parents were a major source of distress, conflict, and anger throughout adolescence, in contrast with secure or dismissing young adults who reported stress with parents was less upsetting than stress with peers and romantic partners (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006).

The second objective of this study was to examine whether mother-adolescent relationship quality, as perceived and reported by adolescents, would predict daughters' IWM in adulthood. We expected that dismissing young adults would, in their teens, have reported low levels of negativity in their relationships with parents because of their tendency to deny anger and idealise attachment figure, whereas the preoccupied would have perceived and reported high levels of negativity. Because people with secure IWM usually report more coherent and balanced memories, and because they are supposed to have benefit from a relationship with sensitive parents, we expected secure young adults would, in their teens, showed more positive description than preoccupied young adults on our measure of mother-adolescent relationship quality.

#### *IWM and Psychological Distress*

Attachment theory proposes that an individual's mental health is intimately tied to relationships with attachment figures who afford emotional support and protection (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). According to Bowlby (1973), during the course of

development, individuals construct internal working models of attachment from their repeated interactions with their attachment figures, and IWM influences future emotion regulation and expression of distress. More specifically, people with a secure IWM have the confidence that a protective and supportive attachment figure will be accessible and available in case of distress (Bretherton, & Munholland, 1999). By contrast, people with insecure models lack flexibility in emotions expression and have negative representation of self and/or others (West & Sheldon-Keller, 1994). Thus, in theory, a secure IWM is an asset for mental health, whereas insecure models are risk factors for psychological distress.

There is empirical evidence that among moderately at-risk adolescents, higher levels of attachment preoccupation, as assessed with the AAI rated with a Q-sort, predicts internalizing symptoms, such as anxiety and depression (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc & Bell, 1998). Preoccupied adults generally report more psychiatric symptoms than dismissing individuals (Fonagy et al. 1996; Dozier, & Lee, 1995), and those symptoms are mainly indicative of self-perceived distress and relationship problems (Pianta, Egeland, & Adam, 1996 ). Also, despite low distress self-reports, dismissing individuals have been found to show increased electrodermal activity during the AAI interview, a sign of emotional suppression (Roisman, Tsai, Chiang, 2004), and to be more at risk for externalized disorders such as conduct or substance abuse in adolescence (Rosenstein & Horowitz, 1996). Furthermore, secure young adults scored significantly lower than preoccupied young adults on the SCL-90, but did not differ from dismissing young adults (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006); after controlling for other variables, like relationships stress and coping strategies, only classification into preoccupied/not preoccupied IWM predicted levels of symptoms.

Because distinct IWMs have been found to be associated with different experiences and different perceptions of past relationship quality with caregivers, these studies suggested that IWM mediates the link between quality of relationship with mother

during adolescence and young adults' psychological distress. In order to test for this mediation, our third objective was to assess the associations between young adults IWM and reported psychological distress. We expected that preoccupied young adults would report higher levels of psychological distress than secure and dismissing young adults. Finally, we examined whether Time 2 IWM mediated the association between Time 1 mother-adolescent relationship quality and Time 2 young adults' psychological distress.

*Quality of Parent-Adolescent Relationship, Intimacy with Parents during Adulthood and Psychological Distress*

Empirical studies showed that family relationship quality in adolescence predicts emotional intimacy with parents in young adulthood. For instance, a longitudinal study based on parents reports (Aquilino, 1997) showed that high levels of closeness and support in parent-adolescent relationship predict higher levels of emotional closeness, shared activities, and support from adult children. In return, social support theories suggest that the way individuals perceived the availability of social support in their environment is a key factor in mental health (e.g., Helgeson, 1993). Perceived emotional support from parents in young adulthood has been linked to lower levels of depressive symptoms during late adolescence (Meadows, Brown, & Elder, 2006). In the same vein, higher levels of intimacy with mother and/or father in young adulthood, as measured by engagement, communication and shared friendship, has been found to be associated with higher levels of psychosocial adjustment, as assessed by lower stress, depression and anxiety, and higher life satisfaction and global self-concept (e.g., Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Richardson & McCabe, 2001). These findings raise the question of the influence of parent-adolescent relationship quality, directly measured during adolescence, on perceived emotional intimacy with parents in young adulthood; they also raise the question of the concurrent associations between young adults' intimacy with parents and their levels of psychological symptoms, and of the mediating role of young adults'



intimacy with parents in the association between parent-adolescent relationship quality and young adults' psychological outcomes.

A fourth objective of this study was to assess the associations between Time 1 quality of mother-adolescent relationship (self-report and observed), and Time 2 young adults' intimacy with mother and psychological distress. We expected that a) high levels of negativity in mother-daughter relationship during adolescence, both self-reported and observed, would be associated with lower levels of intimacy with mothers in adulthood, b) high levels of negativity in mother-daughter relationship during adolescence, both self-reported and observed, would be associated with high levels of psychological distress in adulthood, and c) high levels of intimacy with mothers in adulthood would be linked to low levels of psychological distress. Finally, we examined whether intimacy with mothers in adulthood mediated the association between relationship quality during adolescence and young adults psychological distress.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

Participants were 33 French-speaking adolescent daughters and their mothers from Montreal and suburbs. This is a subsample of a larger sample of 42 families. One participant was eliminated from the final sample because her family didn't complete Time 1 assessment, leaving a total of 32 participants. Nine mothers (28.1%) had a high school education, nine (28.1%) had a college degree and 14 (43.8%) had a university degree; 58.5% of the mothers were full time workers, 22% part-time workers, and 19.5% were housewives. Mean family income was \$50,000 (\$CDN). All mothers were currently in a conjugal relationship, 5 (15.6%) were in a second union. They were recruited through radio and newspaper advertisements asking for mothers of adolescent daughters to volunteer with their daughters for a study on family communication.

At time 1, 42 adolescents and their mothers were invited to a 3-hour lab session. Mean ages of mothers and daughters were respectively 42.47 years (S.D. = 4.61) and

14.61 years ( $S.D.=1.67$ ). Following completion of questionnaires, each pair of adolescents and their mothers was placed in a room in order to have two videotaped conversations. For the first conversation, adolescents were presented with a list of activities and asked to select the ones they shared with their mother in the past 2 weeks. Then they were asked to rate their appreciation for each of them and to talk with their mother about their preferred activity. Mothers and daughters were not given specific instruction for this discussion, which was presented as a warmer to allow the adolescent to get used to the camera. The mean duration of the first discussions was 8.68 min ( $S.D.=4.37$  min). Following this discussion, adolescents were asked to identify a source of conflict with their mother from an adapted version of the Issues Checklist (Printz, Foster, Kent & O'Leary, 1979). Adolescents and mothers were then instructed to discuss the conflict and try to come to a solution. The mean duration of the second discussion was 13.30 min. ( $S.D.=4.80$ ). In order to prevent carry-over of negative affect from the conflict task into the positive discussion, the order of the discussions was not randomized.

At time 2, approximately five years later, 33 daughters, now adults (mean age = 20.34,  $S.D.=1.64$ ), agreed to participate in a follow-up session. Twenty-five young adults (78.1%) were students and 22 (68.8 %) still lived with their parents. Among those who were no longer living with their parents, 5 lived with their romantic partner (15.6% of the whole sample). One participant had a child. During the session, young adults' attachment IWM was assessed using the Adult Attachment Projective (George, West and Pettem, 1999). They also completed a set of questionnaires, including the SCL-90 (Derogatis, 1994) and a questionnaire assessing level of intimacy with mothers (Walker and Thompson, 1983).

T-tests of differences showed that daughters who participated in the Time 2 session were not significantly different from those who did not on Time 1 measures of mothers' socio-economic status ( $p=.84$ ), level of education ( $p=.06$ ), marital satisfaction

( $p = .92$ ) and security of attachment ( $p = .29$ ), and on Time 1 measures of behaviors during the mother-adolescent discussions ( $p = .14$  to  $.96$ ).

### *Measures*

#### *Time 1*

##### *Daughters' Perception of Relationship Quality with Mothers*

Daughters' perception of relationship quality of mothers was measured with the Parental Acceptance and Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner, 1986). This questionnaire comprises 60 statements (e.g. My mother punishes me harshly when she is angry) divided into one positive scale (*warmth*), and three negative scales (*aggression and hostility*, *neglect*, and *rejection*). Adolescents indicated their choice on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (almost always true) to 4 (almost always false). This questionnaire has good psychometric properties and has been used in several studies with children and teenagers aged 7 to 18 years old (Rohner, 1986; 1991). This study used the French version translated and validated by Rohner and his team in an intercultural study that included a sample of French-speaking respondents from Quebec City (Rohner, 1986). In the present study, Cronbach's alphas varied between .80 and .93. Because of high correlations between the scales, only a global score was used, a summation of the three negative scales and of the inverse of the positive scale.

##### *Mother-Daughter Conflict Discussion*

Conflict resolution discussions were coded using the Mother-Adolescent Conflict Resolution Interaction System (MACRIS; Dubé, & Julien, 1997), an adapted version of the Interactional Dimensions Coding System (IDCS; Julien, Markman & Lindhal, 1989). Several studies have used the IDCS with heterosexual couples and have demonstrated good reliability, good concurrent validity with microscopic coding, and good predictive validity of dyadic outcomes (for a review, see Kline et al., 2004). The adapted version for mother-adolescent conflict (MACRIS) was used in a study of the association between marital relationship and mother-adolescent relationship (Dubé et al, 2001). This system contains

individual and dyadic dimensions assessing verbal and non-verbal characteristics of problem solving communication. Positive individual dimensions include: *communication skills*, *validation*, and *problem solving skills*; negative individual dimensions include: *withdrawal*, *conflict behaviors*, and *negative affect*. Finally, dyadic dimensions are *relational synchrony*, *negative escalation*, *control*, and *opposition*.

Coders assign a score to each dimension using a 9-point scale (1- Very low, to 5- Moderate, to 9- Very high). The score is based on the quality, intensity and frequency of behaviors defining each dimension. A team of three independent coders, blind to the attachment classification of the participants, assessed the discussions following a 50-hour training session. First, they observed the interaction to set a general idea of the discussion. Then, the mother and the adolescent behaviors were rated separately, one after the other. Dimensions for verbal content were rated first followed by rating of non-verbal dimensions. Finally, dyadic dimensions were rated.

Twenty-five percent of the interactions were used for inter-rater agreement. Intraclass correlations for each dimensions ranged from .62 to .93, except for *problem solving skills*. This dimension was excluded from the analysis.

Because of high correlations among the dimensions of the Mother-Adolescent Conflict Resolution System and between mothers' and adolescent's scores, a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to reduce the data with the total sample of 42 dyads assessed at Time 1. The analysis yielded three factors accounting for 80.09% of the variance: *Negative conflict behavior*, *Adolescent's involvement in conflict resolution*, and *Mother's withdrawal from conflict resolution*. (For details see Simard, 2006).

#### *Mother-Daughter Discussion about a Shared Activity*

Discussions about a shared activity were coded using the Mother-Adolescent Relation Observation System (MAROS; Simard, Julien, & Pilon, 2002). This system was created using attachment theory concepts as a guiding framework. This system includes

dimensions assessing the verbal content of the discussions: *relational reference*, *descriptive discourse*, *validation*, *requests (mother only)*, *invalidating*, *authority/control (mother only)*, and *self-validation (mother only)*). It also includes dimensions assessing non-verbal behaviors: *listening behavior*, *behavioral involvement*, *positive affect*, and *negative affect*, and two dyadic dimensions: *relational synchrony* and *focus*. Raters assign a score to each dimension using a 9-point scale (1- Very low, to 5- Moderate, to 9- Very high), based on the quality, intensity and frequency of behaviors defining each dimension. First, they observe the interaction to set a general idea of the discussion. Then, the mother and the adolescent behaviors are rated separately, one after the other. Dimensions for verbal content are rated first followed by rating of non-verbal dimensions. Finally, dyadic dimensions are rated. Two independent raters, blind to the attachment classification of the participants, assessed the discussions.

Twenty percent of the interactions were used for inter-rater agreement, using intra-class correlation between the two coders' scores. Because the scores for *validation*, *self-validation*, and *negative affect* were not normally distributed (more than 50% of the ratings were 1 or 2), these three dimensions were dichotomized (presence/absence of the behavior) and percentages of agreement between coders were used. Agreements ranged from .73 to .92 for the continuous dimensions, and from .75 to .88. for the dichotomous dimensions.

Because of high correlations among the dimensions of the MAROS and between the adolescents' and mothers' scores, a principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to reduce the data with the total sample of 42 dyads assessed at Time 1. The analysis yielded four factors accounting for 63.95% of the variance: *Positive involvement in the discussion*, *Negative behavior*, *Relationship validation*, and *Neutral description of shared activity*. (For details see Simard, 2006).

### Time 2

*Adult Attachment Projective (George, West & Pettem, 1999).*

Attachment status of young adults was evaluated using the Adult Attachment Projective (AAP) which has been developed as an alternative to the AAI. The AAP is an adult attachment classification system based on the analysis of verbatim responses to a set of projective stimuli. A set of 8 pictures is presented to the participant. Each picture (with the exception of the first, warm-up picture) depicts scenes that, according to theory, activate the attachment system, for example, illness, solitude, separation, death, and abuse. The participant is asked to create a story about what's going on in the picture. The interview is then transcribed verbatim.

The content of the AAP verbatim is analyzed for discourse quality and specific content evidence. Discourse quality includes an evaluation of stories' coherency (paralleling coherency rating for the AAI) and presence/absence of reference to personal experience. Specific *content evidence* includes a) level of agency of self (assess the degree to which the character in the story moves behaviorally or psychologically in the direction of a positive change), b) connectedness (in pictures where there is only one character, assess the desire or capacity of the character to be in a relationship) and c) synchrony (in dyadic pictures, assess the quality of the relationship between the characters). Finally, *defensive processes* includes a) deactivation (presence in the story of negative evaluation, rejection, social roles, references to power and achievement, minimization, demotion, shutting down), b) cognitive disconnection (presence in the story of uncertainty, withdrawal, anger, entanglement, story themes taking opposing directions, glossing over, and literal) and c) segregated systems (presence in the story of danger, helplessness, loss of control, emptiness, isolation, odd material, dissociation, intrusion of traumatic material from the participant's own life, or impossibility for the participant to make a story).

An overall attachment scheme classification is then assigned following the analysis of the pattern of scores on different scales. Transcripts are classified into one of the four categories for overall state of mind with respect to attachment: a) Secure-

Autonomous yet Freely Valuing of Attachment; b) Insecure-Dismissing of Attachment Relationships; c) Insecure-Preoccupied with Attachment Relationship and d) Unresolved Attachment.

Individuals classified as secure are characterized by moderate to high levels of coherency in their stories and little use of personal references. Characters in their stories display high agency, a desire to connect with others and high synchrony. Furthermore, secure individuals use low levels of defensive processes. Individuals classified as dismissing are characterized by low to moderate levels of coherency and little use of personal references. Characters in their stories display moderate levels of agency, but fail to connect with others and display low synchrony. Furthermore, dismissing individuals use a wealth of deactivation markers. Individuals classified as preoccupied are characterized by marked incoherence of their story and frequent use of personal references. Characters in their story display no agency, and lack in connectedness and synchrony. Furthermore, preoccupied individuals use a wealth of cognitive disconnection markers. Individuals classified as unresolved are characterized by the presence, in one or more of their stories, of a segregated system that is not “contain” or “resolve” because characters show no agency of self or are not protected by others. Convergent validity between AAP and AAI classifications have been established (George & West, 2001). In their study, AAP-AAI convergence for secure versus insecure classifications was .95 ( $\kappa = .75$ ,  $p = .000$ ); convergence for the four major attachment groups was .89 ( $\kappa = .84$ ,  $p = .000$ ). In 2005, George and West completed a large-scale psychometric investigation of the AAP (see George & West in press, for details). This study examined AAP concordance with the AAI, interjudge reliability, test-retest reliability (retest after three months) and discriminant validity. The study used a sample of 144 participants that included two sub-samples of individuals. The results of this large scale study provide evidence of the reliability and validity of the AAP. As with previous validity work, all judges were blind to AAI and AAP classifications and other informations on participants.

Convergent agreement between the AAP and AAI for the four major attachment groups was 90% ( $\kappa = .84$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Convergent agreement for two group classifications was 97% ( $\kappa = .88$ ,  $p < .000$ ). AAI interjudge reliability was calculated on 30 cases (21% of sample). AAI interjudge reliability was 85% agreement for four-group classifications (i.e. secure, dismissing, preoccupied, unresolved;  $\kappa = .72$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and 87% agreement for two-group classifications (secure vs. insecure;  $\kappa = .63$ ). AAP interjudge reliability was calculated between a primary judge and two independent judges. Four-group classification agreement between Judges 1 and 2 was 90% ( $\kappa = .85$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and Judges 1 and 3 was 85% ( $\kappa = .79$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The concordance rate for two-group classifications for the two pairs of AAP judges was 99% ( $\kappa = .66$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and 92% ( $\kappa = .82$ ,  $p = .000$ ), respectively. Test-retest reliability was calculated based on 69 participants (48% of sample, 39 females, 30 males) who completed the AAP retest 3 months following the original AAP administration. 58 (84%) were classified in the same attachment group categories ( $\kappa = .78$ ,  $p = .000$ ; 82% stability for secure, 96% stability for dismissing, 62% for preoccupied; 80% for unresolved). Verbal intelligence (WAIS Vocabulary and Similarities subtests) and social desirability (Bindra Inventory of Desirable Responding) were not related to AAP classifications.

In the current study, all transcripts were coded and classified by the first author, who was trained by Carol George, Ph.D. and Malcolm West, Ph.D and achieved reliability. Inter-rater reliability with another reliable coder trained by George and West was established in 40% of the classifications. Percentage of inter-judge agreement was .92 ( $\kappa = .81$ ) for secure vs. insecure classifications; and .77 ( $\kappa = .65$ ) for the four attachment groups. Disagreements were discussed and consensus was used in the analysis.

*Intimacy in Relationship with Mother (Walker & Thompson, 1983)*

This questionnaire is composed of 17 items describing the relationship with the mother (eg: She shows that she loves me; We feel like we're a unit). Participants indicate



on a Likert scale of 1 to 7 the degree of correspondence of each item with the actual relationship with her mother. The mean is then calculated to obtain a score between 1 to 7, high scores indicating more intimacy. This scale was used in a study of intimacy and intergenerational support and contact among mothers and daughters, using a sample of student women (age 20-25) and their mothers and grandmothers (Walker & Thompson, 1983). The general intimacy scale was issued of a factor analysis of 50 items reflecting various aspects of intimacy. The 17 items selected for the final scale displayed noteworthy (at least .5) and unique (less than .25 on all other factors) loadings. In the original study, Cronbach alphas ranged from .91 to .97 depending upon respondents and relationship targets. In the current study, the alpha coefficient was .98.

*Symptom Checklist—90—Revised (SCL-90-R).*

The SCL-90 (Derogatis, 1994) is a 90-item self-report survey of symptoms typically reported by medical and psychiatric patients. It is intended to measure symptoms intensity on nine different subscales. The participant rates the intensity of each symptom using a 5-point scale of distress (ranging from 0, *not at all*, to 4, *extremely*), indicating the rate of occurrence of the symptom during the time reference. The SCL-90 normally requires between 12 and 20 minutes to complete (Derogatis 2000). The SCL-90 has been used in numerous studies as a brief indicator of mental health and several recent studies that use the SCL-90 as a measure of mental status concern mental health issues in a nonpsychiatric setting (for a review, see Holi, 2003).

The scale global index of distress is the Global Severity Index (GSI), which is the mean value of all of the 25 items. The internal consistencies have been good (Holi, 2003). For example, Cronbach coefficient in a study with 209 symptomatic volunteers ranged from 0.77 to 0.90 (Derogatis et al. 1976). Stability coefficients (test-retest reliability) for the SCL-90-R have generally been adequate across a range of patient groups and test-retest intervals (Derogatis 2000). A study with a test-retest interval of 1 week for 94 mixed psychiatric outpatients had a range of 0.78–0.90 (Derogatis 1983); a second study

with a 10-week interval between tests had correlation coefficients ranging from 0.68 to 0.80 (Derogatis 2000). The results of studies concerning the validity of the instrument are controversial; there is strong support for its validity as a measure of general symptom severity and changes in symptom severity but less support for its suggested dimensionality (Holi, 2003). For this reason, in the current study, we used only the global index of distress and Cronbach alpha was .95.

## Results

### *AAP Classifications*

The distribution of attachment IWM in this sample was as follows : 11 secure, 6 dismissing, 4 preoccupied and 11 unresolved participants. Because the proportion of individuals classified as Unresolved was higher than expected in a normative sample, alternative classifications for the unresolved group were assigned by examining an individual's patterning of defense mechanisms (deactivation and cognitive disconnection) on the AAP, for a total of 11 secure, 9 dismissing and 12 preoccupied participants. Distribution of young adults AAP classification shows a higher proportion of insecure individuals than in normative samples of either adults or adolescents assessed with the AAI (van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1996), but is comparable with the AAI distribution of Allen and Hauser's (1996) sample, which included some young adults from the community and some with psychiatric history.

### *Preliminary Analyses*

Table 1 shows bivariate correlations among Time 1 variables. Because there were few correlations between the factors in the two discussions tasks, and no correlations among factors within each task (they were orthogonal factors), each factor was analyzed separately. Table 1 also shows weak correlations between perceived quality of relationship with mother (PARQ score) and the behavioral factors; these modest correlations suggest that an orthogonal dimension of the quality of mother-adolescent

relationship was assessed by the PARQ. Thus the PARQ was analyzed separately from the behavioral variables.

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insert Table 1

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Analyses of the associations between adult daughters' age and Time 2 variables (intimacy with mother, SCL-90 scores, and adult daughters IWM) indicated no significant effect of age on the dependent variables. Chi-square analyses showed no relations between IWM and living arrangement, education, or occupation (student or not). T-tests showed no effects of living arrangement, education, or occupation on levels of intimacy with mother and on psychological distress.

*Associations Between Time 1 Quality of Mother-Adolescent Relationships and Time 2 Young Adult's IWM .*

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of Time 1 mother-adolescent variables as a function of young adults IWMs. In order to assess whether Time 2 young adults IWM was associated with Time 1 mother-daughter communication, a series of univariate analyses of variance was performed with IWM as a between group independent variable and the factors as the dependant variables. For the shared activity discussion, results showed that dyads' levels of negative behaviors differentiated young adults IWM,  $F(2, 31)= 3.29$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .19$ . As expected, Tukey post hoc tests showed that Time 2 preoccupied young adults expressed higher levels of Time 1 negative behaviors than Time 2 secure young adults ( $p < .05$ ). For the conflict discussion, levels of adolescent involvement in conflict resolution differentiated their adult IWM,  $F(2, 31)=5.85$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .29$ . Tukey post hoc tests indicated that Time 2 preoccupied and secure young adults displayed lower levels of Time 1 involvement in conflict resolution than Time 2 dismissing young adults (dismissing/preoccupied,  $p < .10$ ; dismissing/secure,  $p < .05$ ). No other differences were found.

In order to assess whether Time 2 young adults' IWM was associated with Time 1 adolescents perception of mother-daughter relationship quality, univariate analysis of variance was performed with adolescents PARQ global score as the dependent variable and young adults IWM as a between group independent variable. Results showed that daughters Time 1 evaluation of relationship with their mother discriminated Time 2 IWM at the trend level,  $F(2,31) = 2.69$ ,  $p < .10$ ,  $\eta^2 = .16$ . Again, as expected, examination of the means showed that Time 2 preoccupied daughters evaluated, at Time 1, their relationship with their mother more negatively than dismissing daughters (Tukey post hoc,  $p < .10$ ). No other differences were found.

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insert Table 2

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#### *Associations Between Time 2 Young Adults IWM and Psychological Distress*

In order to assess whether young adults IWM influenced levels of psychological distress, a univariate analysis of variance was performed with SCL-90 as the dependent variable and IWM as the independent variable. Contrary to expectations, there were no associations between IWM and psychological distress, even when including the Unresolved classification. Therefore, IWM was not included in the mediation analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

#### *Associations Between Time 1 Quality of Family Relationships, Time 2 Intimacy with mothers, and Time 2 Psychological Distress*

As predicted, Time 1 adolescents' involvement in conflict resolution was negatively correlated with Time 2 intimacy with mothers,  $r(32) = -.39$ ,  $p < .05$ . Also, Time 1 perceived negativity in mother-daughter relationship was negatively correlated with Time 2 intimacy,  $r(32) = -.63$ ,  $p < .001$ . Finally, as expected, Time 2 higher levels of intimacy with mothers was associated with Time 2 lower levels of psychological distress,  $r(32) = -.51$ ,  $p < .01$ .

There were no significant correlations between Time 1 behaviors in mother-adolescent discussions and Time 2 psychological distress. However, as expected, higher levels of Time 1 perceived negativity in mother-daughter relationship were associated with higher levels of Time 2 psychological distress,  $r(32) = .30$   $p < .10$ .

#### *Mediation Test.*

We used regression analyses to test a mediation model of the association between Time 1 perceived quality of relationship with mother during adolescence and adult daughters' psychological distress at Time 2, using adult daughters' intimacy with mothers as a mediator. Perceived quality of relationship with mothers during adolescence had no effect on psychological distress when intimacy with mothers was partialled out. The beta value for the perceived quality of relationship dropped from .30 to approximately zero (-.03), and the total variance in psychological distress accounted for by perceived quality of relationship with mothers during adolescence raised from 6.2% to 21.2% when intimacy with mother was included in the equation. Sobel's test yielded a Z score of 2.22 ( $p < .05$ ) indicating that the mediated path was significantly different from zero (Table 3). When we reversed the order of the variables in the equation (using psychological distress as the mediator and intimacy with mother as the dependent variable), the mediation no longer operated because the change in beta value was non significant after including psychological distress in the equation (-.52 as compared to -.63). The reversal procedure verified the mediation effect by overruling a bidirectional relation that could have been accounted for by shared method variance (timing of measurement and observation methods).

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insert Table 3

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Discussion

A main objective of this study was to evaluate the mediating role of young adults IWM and current emotional intimacy with mothers in the association between mother-adolescent relationship quality and young adults psychological distress. We first expected that young adults IWM would be linked to past behaviors observed in their communication with mothers during adolescence. More specifically, it was expected that levels of conflict resolution skills and levels of positive and negative behaviors in the two mother-adolescent discussions would discriminate preoccupied and secure IWMs in adulthood.

Our results partially supported our expectations. Adult preoccupied daughters had, during adolescence, more negative communication with their mothers during shared activities discussions. This finding is in line with attachment theory that describes preoccupied adults as flooded by anger toward their attachment figures (Hesse, 1999) In the same vein, Becker-Stoll et al. (2001) also found that adolescents with preoccupied IWM expressed higher levels of anger during conflict discussion with mothers, as compared to adolescents with other IWMs.

Our results also showed that preoccupied young adults were less involved than dismissing young adults in conflict discussions with mothers during adolescence. Overall, preoccupied young adults displayed, as adolescents, lower levels of communication skills and higher levels of withdrawal of the conflict resolution than the dismissing young adults. This finding is in line with previous studies (Allen & Hauser, 1996) which linked young adults preoccupied IWM with inhibition of autonomy and relatedness in conflict discussions with parents during adolescence. Passivity during conflict discussions with mothers was indeed predictive of a state of mind of helplessness in face of attachment distress. Why did secure young adults also show little involvement in conflict discussions, as compared to dismissing young women? It is possible that less intense conflicts in the history of communication between secure daughters and mothers resulted

in current communications evolving smoothly and quietly. However, we did not have measures of conflict intensity permitting to test this interpretation.

A second objective of this study was to examine whether perceived negativity in the mother-adolescent relationship was associated with young adults IWM. We expected that preoccupied young adults would have perceived high levels of negativity in parent-adolescent relationships by contrast with dismissing young adults, who would have perceived low negativity, and secure young adults who would have endorse a more realistic view, midway between preoccupied and dismissing young adults. Our results showed a trend in this direction since preoccupied daughters showed the highest levels of negative perception. Thus, during their adolescence, preoccupied young adults not only had more negative communication with mothers, but they also were more dissatisfied with their relationship with mothers. These results are in line with attachment theory and previous empirical results (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006). The overall negative experience of preoccupied young adults with mothers in adolescence may have contributed to the difficulties these young women had, during IWM assessment with the AAP, to offer coherent discussion on attachment issues, to use connectedness with others when facing attachment distress and to describe satisfying attachment relationships.

Contrary to expectations, IWM was not associated with young adults' levels of psychological distress. This result can be explained by the very low levels of symptoms reported by participants in our study. In this sample, the mean SCL-90 score was only .60 and had small variance. Furthermore, the undifferentiated multidimensional character of the SCL measure of psychological distress may have accounted for the lack of association, given that different diagnosis have been empirically associated with different IWM (Dozier, Stovall, & Albus, 1999). For example, among unipolar affective disorders, observed associations between attachment classification and depression subtypes can be linked to the severity and prognosis of these diagnoses (Fonagy et al., 1996). Major depression disorder, often an episodic disorder associated with lower disruption of

personality, was associated with a higher prevalence of secure participants as compared to other affective disorders (Fonagy et al, 1996). However, dysthymia, a particularly persistent disorder that leads to significant impairment in social and occupational functioning, has been linked to greater odds of being classified as preoccupied in the AAP (West & George, 2002). Therefore, more specific measures of psychological distress might have yielded different associations with our sample of IWMs.

Moreover, the finding that IWMs are not linked to self-reports of psychological distress are in line with previous findings showing no links between IWM as assessed with AAI and self-reports of marital distress, whereas there are links between IWM and emotional regulation during marital conflict (Bouthillier, Julien, Dubé, Bélanger, & Hamelin, 2002).

Another objective of this study was to examine whether, besides IWM, emotional intimacy with mothers during adulthood mediated the association between Time 1 mother-adolescent relationship quality (self-reported and observed) and levels of psychological distress in young adulthood. As expected, high levels of perceived negativity in mother-daughter relationship during adolescence was linked to lower levels of intimacy with mothers. This is in line with previous research showing continuity in parent-child relationship during the transition between adolescence and young adulthood (e.g., Aquilino, 1997). Also as expected, adult daughters who reported higher levels of intimacy with mothers also reported lower levels of psychological distress. This result is in concordance with previous empirical results (Richardson and McCabe, 2001) suggesting that supportive relationship with mothers in adulthood facilitates adaptation to life change in young women. Intimacy with mother mediated the link between negativity in mother-adolescent relationship and psychological distress. These findings support the claim that in the process of early adulthood development, when relationships with parents evolve to achieve a state of autonomy and relatedness, current relationships with family of origin remain important for psychological adaptation during this period of life.



Perceived emotional intimacy with the attachment figure may represent a resource for psychological adaptation during the transition to adulthood.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting the findings. Our small sample size constrained generalization of our findings and thus replication would be needed. Another limitation of the study is its focus on mother-daughter dyads. A replication of this study could include other dyads such as father-daughter, father-son or mother-son in order to examine whether gender moderates the associations we found. It is also important to note that daughters' IWM was not assessed during adolescence, thus the observed links between mother-adolescent relationship quality and young adults IWM may be accounted for by continuity in IWM from adolescence to young adulthood. Other studies should attempt to evaluate the contribution of mother-adolescent relationship quality to the prediction of adult IWM when previous adolescents' IWM are controlled. Another limitation of the study is that the percentage of variance in psychological distress explained by perceived negativity in the mother-adolescent relationship is only 9%. Thus, whereas perceived negativity in mother-adolescent relationship contributes to psychological distress in adulthood, many other factors inside and outside family relationships still account for unexplained variance in psychological distress during the transition to adulthood.

Beside these limitations, the current study has major strengths as well. This study provided empirical evidence of the associations between markers of family relationships quality during adolescence and the Adult Attachment Projective (AAP; George, West & Pettem, 1999). In doing so, the current study contributed to the validation of this new assessment method. Studies of adult attachment usually used the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main; 1985), considered as the "gold standard", to assess IWM. The AAP has been developed as an alternative to the AAI. Shorter to administrate and to code, this instrument is less intrusive than the AAI because participants are not directly questioned about their experiences. Furthermore, it is the

only representational measure that examines the attachment state of mind with regard to agency of self, the goal-corrected partnership, connectedness to others, and the organization and dysregulation of defense (West & George, 2002).

The longitudinal nature of this study provided stronger evidence that mother-adolescent relationship quality is predictive of young women working model of attachment, current relationship with their mother, and levels of psychological distress. The utilization of various methods of assessment (behavioral observations, self-reports on quality of relationship, and assessment of IWM by projective testing) is another strength of the study. Our results are promising, but studies with larger samples are needed to demonstrate the contribution of the quality of relationships with parents to IWM and psychological adaptation in adulthood.

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Table 1

*Intercorrelations Between Time 1 Mother-Adolescent Variables and Time 2 Continuous Variables.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
TIME 1									
1. PARQ- Adolescent's evaluation Conflict discussion (MACRIS)									
2. negative conflict behavior	.33 <sup>+</sup>								
3. adolescent's involvement in the conflict resolution	.05	.05							
4. mother's withdrawal of conflict resolution	.07	.05	.12						
Shared activity discussion (MAROS)									
5. positive involvement	-.34 <sup>+</sup>	-.16	.37*	-.18					
6. negative behavior	.21	.46**	-.20	.06	-.07				
7. relationship validation	.00	.21	.36*	.00	.02	-.15			
8. neutral description of the activity	.19	.27	.17	-.02	.02	.02	.02		
TIME 2									
9. Intimacy score	-.63**	-.26	-.39*	-.23	.05	.00	-.09	-.24	
10. SCL-90 score	.30 <sup>+</sup>	.24	.10	-.02	-.20	-.06	.10	.07	-.51**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , <sup>+</sup>  $p < 0.10$ .

Table 2

*Time 1 Mother-Adolescent Variables and Time 2 Continuous Variables as a Function of Young Adults' IWM*

TIME 2 IWM	TIME 1								TIME 2	
	PARQ- Adolescent's perception	Conflict discussion			Shared activity discussion				Intimacy with mother <u>M</u>	SCL- 90 score <u>M</u>
		Negative conflict behavior <u>M</u>	Adolescent's involvement in the conflict resolution <u>M</u>	Mother's withdrawal of conflict resolution <u>M</u>	Positive involvement <u>M</u>	Negative behavior <u>M</u>	Relationship validation <u>M</u>	Neutral description of the activity <u>M</u>		
	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)	(S.D.)
Dismissing N=9	78.11 (11.54)	-.31 (.85)	.84 (.31)	.11 (.95)	.39 (.79)	-.18 (.85)	.44 (1.16)	-.03 (.83)	5.84 (.85)	.50 (.32)
Secure N=11	82.27 (14.83)	-.30 (.67)	-.54 (1.03)	-.29 (.87)	-.10 (.76)	-.42 (.51)	-.09 (.82)	-.27 (1.44)	5.90 (1.46)	.67 (.49)
Preoccupied N=12	94.17 (21.11)	.45 (1.34)	-.10 (1.07)	-.14 (.64)	-.09 (1.23)	.47 (1.08)	.16 (.88)	.22 (.71)	5.59 (1.58)	.62 (.36)
Total N=33	85.56 (17.67)	-.02 (1.05)	.01 (1.04)	-.12 (0.81)	.04 (0.96)	-.02 (0.92)	.15 (0.90)	.02 (1.03)	5.77 (1.33)	.60 (.39)

Table 3

*Linear Regression Testing Time 2 Intimacy as a Mediator of the Link Between Time 1 PARQ and Time 2 SCL-90 (dependent variable)*

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1,574	,675		2,332	,027
Time 1 PARQ Score	-,001	,005	-,031	-,152	,880
Time 2 Intimacy score	-,157	,061	-,532	-2,586	,015
F (1, 31) = 5,164, p<.05					
Model adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =21.2%					

## CHAPITRE 3

### DISCUSSION GÉNÉRALE

## DISCUSSION GÉNÉRALE

### 3.1 RAPPEL DES PRINCIPAUX RÉSULTATS

La présente thèse avait pour objectif principal d'évaluer longitudinalement l'influence du schème d'attachement de la mère et de la qualité relationnelle entre la mère et son adolescente sur l'adaptation psychosociale de la fille lors de la période de transition vers l'âge adulte. La première étude examinait tout d'abord l'hypothèse selon laquelle le schème d'attachement de la mère influence la qualité de la communication avec sa fille adolescente dans un contexte de discussion agréable et dans un contexte de résolution de conflit; puis l'hypothèse selon laquelle le schème d'attachement de la mère influence la qualité de la communication de sa fille adulte avec une amie dans un contexte de soutien social. La deuxième étude examinait l'hypothèse selon laquelle la qualité de la communication mère-adolescente et la qualité perçue de la relation mère-adolescente influence le développement psychosocial des jeunes femmes au début de l'âge adulte. Cette hypothèse a été examinée en étudiant le schème d'attachement des jeunes adultes et la qualité perçue de leur relation actuelle avec leur mère comme étant de possibles médiateurs de la relation entre la qualité de la relation mère-adolescente et les symptômes de détresse psychologique au début de l'âge adulte.

Les résultats de la première étude montrent que lors d'une discussion ayant pour thème une activité partagée avec leur adolescente, les mères ayant un schème d'attachement sécurisant/autonome, comparativement aux mères préoccupées, ont des discussions avec leur fille caractérisées par des niveaux plus élevés d'implication comportementale et de validation de la relation. De plus, les mères sécures/autonomes ont des discussions caractérisées par des niveaux moindres de comportements négatifs et par davantage de contenu descriptif comparativement aux mères ayant un schème d'attachement évitant. Lors de la résolution de conflit, les adolescentes ayant des mères

sécurisées/autonomes s'impliquent davantage dans la résolution de conflit que celles dont les mères sont préoccupées. Les résultats montrent également que les adolescentes plus âgées ont de meilleures habiletés de communication et que ces mêmes habiletés sont également plus élevées chez les filles dont la mère a un schème d'attachement sécurisant/autonome, comparativement à celles dont les mères sont insécurisées, ce qui suggère que les mères sécurisées/autonomes favorisent une plus grande maturité sur le plan relationnel chez leur adolescente.

De plus, cette étude montre qu'à l'âge adulte, les jeunes femmes ayant bénéficié d'une relation avec une mère sécurisée/autonome, lorsque comparées aux filles ayant dont la mère a un schème d'attachement évitant, se montrent plus habiles à soutenir un(e) ami(e) qui leur confie une difficulté personnelle. Finalement, les résultats montrent que le niveau de comportements conflictuels entre la mère et son adolescente modère le lien entre le schème d'attachement de la mère au temps 1 et l'habileté des filles adultes à offrir du soutien à leur ami(e) au temps 2. En effet, chez les jeunes femmes dont la mère a un schème d'attachement évitant, seulement celles qui ont expérimenté des niveaux élevés de comportements conflictuels avec leur mère durant l'adolescence ont des niveaux moindres de synchronie lors de la discussion de soutien avec leur amie.

Les résultats de la deuxième étude montrent que les jeunes femmes ayant un schème d'attachement préoccupé au début de l'âge adulte percevaient, durant leur adolescence, des niveaux plus élevés de négativité dans leur relation avec leur mère lorsque comparées à celles ayant un schème d'attachement évitant. De plus, chez les jeunes femmes ayant un schème d'attachement préoccupé, les discussions avec leur mère étaient caractérisées par des niveaux plus élevés de comportements négatifs que celles ayant un schème d'attachement sécurisant; et moins d'implication de l'adolescente dans la résolution de conflit avec sa mère comparativement à celles ayant un schème d'attachement évitant. Les jeunes femmes qui percevaient des niveaux élevés de



négativité dans la relation avec leur mère durant l'adolescence ont tendance à rapporter davantage de symptômes de détresse psychologique. Le niveau d'intimité perçue avec la mère à l'âge adulte médiatise la relation entre la négativité perçue dans la relation mère-adolescente et la détresse psychologique à l'âge adulte.

### 3.2 CONTRIBUTION DE LA RECHERCHE

L'étude présentée dans l'article 1 a été la première à documenter l'influence du schème d'attachement de la mère sur la communication avec son adolescente lors d'une discussion à propos d'activités agréables partagées. Ce résultat souligne l'importance du système d'attachement dans plusieurs aspects des relations familiales. De plus, il met en lumière la contribution du schème d'attachement de la mère pour la qualité de la communication positive au-delà de l'enfance. Notre étude souligne l'importance d'étudier ce lien, d'autant plus que la proportion de comportements observés qui étaient liés au schème d'attachement de la mère était supérieure durant la discussion à propos d'une activité agréable que pour la résolution de conflit. De plus, cette discussion, contrairement à la discussion de conflit, nous a permis de différencier les interactions des mères sécures/autonomes de celles des autres mères même lorsque l'adolescente était âgée de plus de 15 ans. Nos résultats suggèrent qu'au-delà de quinze ans, les adolescentes et leur mère adoptent davantage une attitude d'égal à égal dans la résolution de conflits, comme le montrent la plus grande implication des adolescentes plus âgées dans la résolution de conflits avec leur mère, et que ces changements normatifs sont peu liés au schème d'attachement des mères; alors que la valence positive des interactions mère-adolescente continue d'être influencée par le schème d'attachement des mères même lorsque les adolescentes ont plus de 15 ans.

Globalement, les résultats obtenus quant au lien entre le schème d'attachement des mères et leurs discussions avec leurs filles montrent qu'en plus de permettre à leur

adolescente de développer des habiletés de résolution de conflits plus matures, un schème d'attachement sécurisant chez la mère favorise l'implication émotionnelle et cognitive de leur fille dans les discussions à propos de sujets relationnels positifs.

Une intéressante contribution de cet article a été de montrer que les jeunes femmes dont la mère avait un schème d'attachement évitant et qui vivaient des niveaux élevés de conflits avec leur mère durant l'adolescence ont moins d'habiletés de soutien social à l'âge adulte. Il est possible que le fait de ne pas avoir été exposé à un modèle de soutien émotif durant leur adolescence les ait laissées moins bien préparées à soutenir autrui dans des difficultés émotives. Ces résultats vont dans le sens de la théorie de l'attachement qui propose que la relation avec les figures d'attachement représente la base pour le développement des relations intimes futures. Notre étude a cependant contribué à spécifier les conditions sous lesquelles le fait d'avoir une mère ayant un schème d'attachement évitant devient une vulnérabilité pour la communication dans les relations intimes à l'âge adulte.

Il est intéressant de souligner que les mères sécures/autonomes et leurs adolescentes, indépendamment du contexte et du niveau de comportements négatifs qui est exprimé, utilisent davantage de comportements positifs lorsqu'elles communiquent ensemble, ce qui suggère que l'attachement sécurisant/autonome influence surtout les comportements communicationnels positifs. Les comportements conflictuels sont liés à l'attachement seulement parce qu'ils exacerbent l'impact négatif du faible niveau de soutien émotif caractéristique des relations d'attachement évitantes.

Une des forces du deuxième article réside dans l'utilisation de méthodes variées d'évaluation: observation des comportements, questionnaires, et mesure projective de l'attachement. En effet, les caractéristiques de la relation mère-adolescente qui ont été liées à la qualité perçue de la relation actuelle avec la mère et au schème d'attachement adulte ont été mesurées autant à l'aide d'observation du comportement qu'avec des questionnaires, ce qui répond à une lacune fréquemment soulignée chez les études

utilisant seulement des questionnaires (e.g. Belsky et al., 2001). L'étude a également contribué à enrichir nos connaissances quant aux antécédents du schème d'attachement adulte, apportant par la même occasion une contribution à la validation d'un nouvel outil d'évaluation de l'attachement adulte, soit l'Adult Attachment Projective.

Globalement, une des richesses de la présente thèse est sa nature longitudinale qui a permis d'évaluer dans le temps l'influence du schème d'attachement de la mère et de la qualité observée et perçue de la relation mère-adolescente sur le développement psychosocial de sa fille lors de la transition vers l'âge adulte. Nos résultats ont montré que la qualité de la relation entre la mère et son adolescente permet de prédire le schème d'attachement de la jeune femme au début de l'âge adulte, le niveau d'intimité qu'elle perçoit dans sa relation avec sa mère. Nous avons également montré que la qualité perçue de la relation actuelle avec la mère médiatise le lien entre la négativité dans la relation mère-adolescente et le niveau de détresse psychologique à l'âge adulte.

### 3.3 LIMITES DE L'ÉTUDE ET RECHERCHES FUTURES

Une limite de la présente thèse réside dans son échantillon. Tout d'abord, la petite taille de notre échantillon apporte une réserve importante à la généralisation des résultats. Des études futures auraient avantage à reprendre les hypothèses de la présente thèse avec un échantillon plus grand. De plus, notre échantillon ne comprenait que des mères et leurs filles. Plusieurs études ont montré que la relation mère-fille était plus proche émotionnellement que les autres relations familiales (e.g. Belsky et al. 2001). Il serait donc intéressant d'évaluer si les liens trouvés dans l'étude se retrouvent également pour les dyades mère-fils, père-fils et père-fille. De plus, la contribution de la relation d'attachement avec le père, en plus de celle de la relation avec la mère, pourrait être étudiée dans l'adaptation des jeunes à la transition à l'âge adulte.

Étant donné la faible prévalence de symptômes psychologiques rapportés par les participantes de notre étude, il est difficile de tirer des conclusions valide quant au rôle médiateur du schème d'attachement dans le lien entre la qualité de la relation mère-fille à l'adolescence et les problèmes de santé mentale. Il serait donc intéressant de reproduire les résultats de la présente étude auprès d'un échantillon clinique.

Il serait également intéressant de reprendre les hypothèses de la présente thèse auprès d'un échantillon un peu plus âgé. Des transitions importantes telles le début de la vie conjugale et la parentalité sont à même de nuancer l'influence des relations avec la famille d'origine à la fois sur la qualité des relations intimes et le niveau de détresse psychologique.

Finalement, il aurait été intéressant d'avoir accès au schème d'attachement des jeunes filles à l'adolescence, ce qui nous aurait permis non seulement de mieux comprendre l'influence unique de la relation avec la mère au-delà de l'enfance dans le développement du schème d'attachement adulte, mais aussi de documenter la stabilité des schèmes d'attachement lors de la transition vers l'âge adulte, et la transmission intergénérationnelle des schèmes d'attachement. Dans la présente thèse, aucun lien entre le schème d'attachement des mères et celui de leur fille adulte n'a été trouvé. Cependant, la littérature actuelle a peu documenté la correspondance entre les schèmes d'attachement des enfants devenus adulte et leurs parents, si ce n'est dans des échantillons où la fille adulte est elle-même une mère (Benoît & Parker, 1994). Au cours des années futures, de telles études devraient voir le jour.

TEMPS 1

TEMPS 2

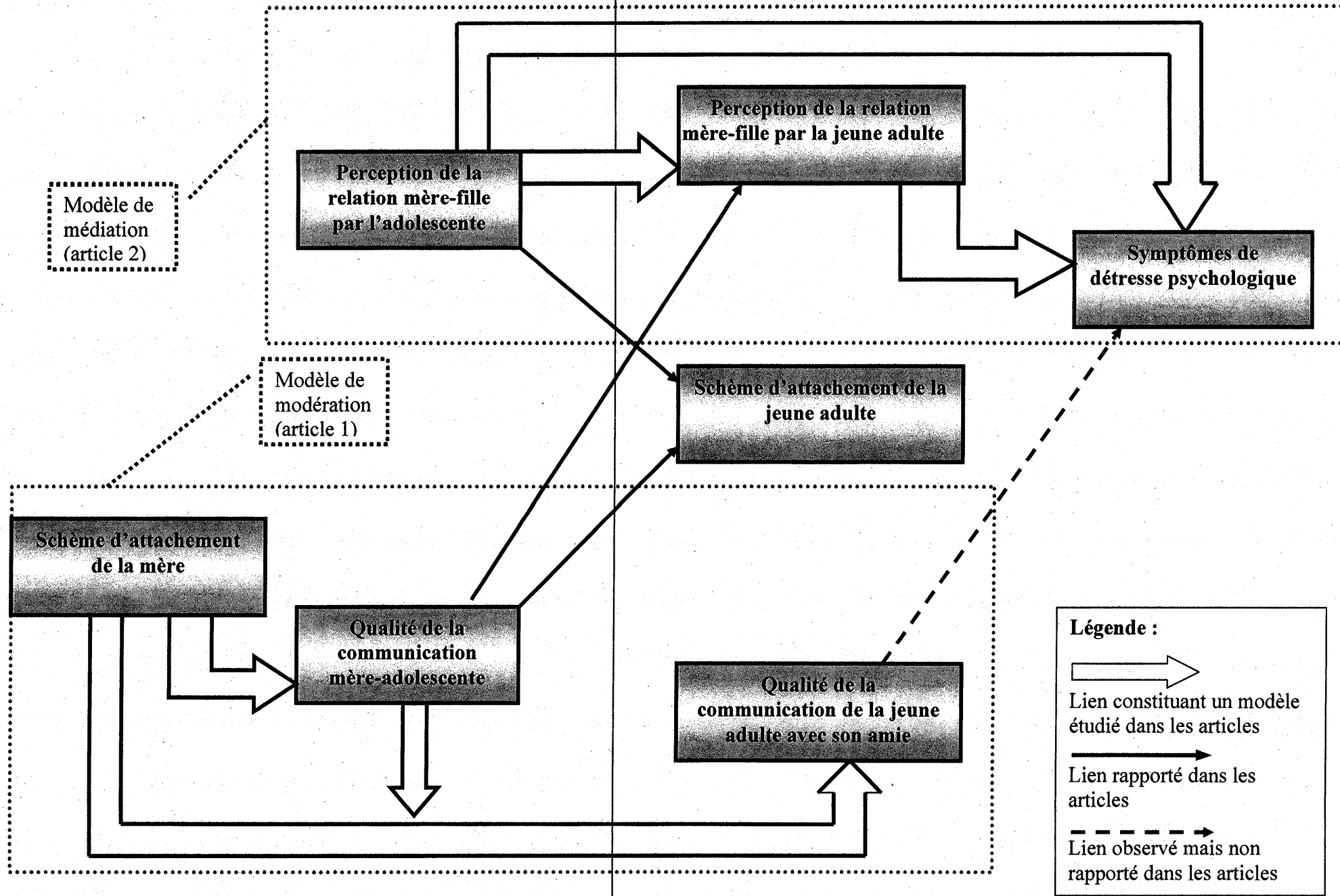


Figure 3. Résumé des principaux résultats de la thèse.

## APPENDICE A

Projet Communication-Famille  
Laboratoire de recherche sur le couple et son environnement  
Département de psychologie

#### FORMULE DE CONSENTEMENT-MÈRE

Le but de cette étude consiste à rencontrer des parents accompagnés de leurs adolescentes pour comprendre le fonctionnement de la communication au sein de la famille. Nous tenterons, à partir des informations recueillies au cours de cette rencontre, d'identifier les éléments de la communication qui caractérisent différents types de relations familiales. Il n'existe pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses à nos questions.

Votre participation comme mère d'une adolescente implique trois types d'activités au cours de la rencontre. Le premier type d'activité consiste en une entrevue individuelle au cours de laquelle il vous sera posé des questions sur les relations que vous avez eues avec vos propres parents quand vous étiez jeune. Le deuxième type d'activité consiste à remplir quelques questionnaires sur votre relation de couple et votre relation avec votre fille. Le troisième type d'activité consiste à avoir deux discussions avec votre conjoint sur un moment agréable et une source de désaccord et deux discussions avec votre fille sur les mêmes thèmes. La rencontre durera approximativement 3 heures.

Par ailleurs, puisque votre fille est mineure, nous avons également besoin de votre autorisation pour qu'elle puisse participer à l'étude. Sa participation implique une entrevue individuelle au cours de laquelle il lui sera posé des questions sur ses relations avec vous sur un moment agréable et une source de désaccord.

Tout au long de la rencontre vous êtes libre de vous impliquer à votre rythme et même de cesser votre participation si vous le désirez.

Pour nous aider à comprendre le contenu des entrevues et des discussions, nous les enregistrons sur bandes vidéoscopiques. Les bandes seront la propriété exclusive du Laboratoire sur le Couple et son Environnement et ne seront visionnées que par les assistants de recherche chargés de l'analyse des enregistrements. De plus, afin d'assurer une plus grande confidentialité, les enregistrements et les questionnaires n'auront aucune information d'identification, sauf un numéro de recherche.

Cette étude est dirigée par le Dr. Danielle Julien, professeure-chercheuse du Département de psychologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Si dans le futur vous aviez des questions ou désiriez des informations supplémentaires sur cette étude, nous serons disponibles pour vous répondre. De plus, si vous désirez, nous vous offrons une consultation gratuite avec un psychologue.

«J'ai lu la description ci-dessus des activités de la rencontre et je comprends ce qu'on attend de moi au cours de ces activités. Je désire participer à cette étude. J'accepte d'y être enregistrée. De plus, j'accepte que ma fille puisse participer à cette étude. J'accepte également que l'information recueillie puisse être utilisée pour fins de communication scientifique et professionnelle. Il est entendu que l'anonymat sera respecté à mon égard et pour ma fille ».

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature chercheur(e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### FORMULE DE CONSENTEMENT-ADOLESCENTE

Le but de cette étude consiste à rencontrer des adolescentes accompagnées de leurs parents pour comprendre le fonctionnement de la communication au sein de la famille. Nous tenterons, à partir des informations recueillies au cours de cette rencontre, d'identifier les éléments de la communication qui caractérisent différents types de relations familiales. Il n'existe pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses à nos questions.

Ta participation comme adolescente implique trois types d'activités au cours de la rencontre. Le premier type d'activité consiste en une entrevue individuelle au cours de laquelle il te sera posé des questions sur les relations que tu as avec tes parents depuis que tu es jeune. Le deuxième type d'activité consiste à remplir quelques questionnaires sur ta relation avec ta mère, ton père ou le conjoint de ta mère. Le troisième type d'activité consiste à avoir deux discussions avec ta mère sur un moment agréable et une source de désaccord. La rencontre durera approximativement 3 heures.

Tout au long de la rencontre vous êtes libre de vous impliquer à votre rythme et même de cesser votre participation si vous le désirez.

Pour nous aider à comprendre le contenu des entrevues et des discussions, nous les enregistrons sur bandes vidéoscopiques. Les bandes seront la propriété exclusive du Laboratoire sur le Couple et son Environnement et ne seront visionnées que par les assistants de recherche chargés de l'analyse des enregistrements. De plus, afin d'assurer une plus grande confidentialité, les enregistrements et les questionnaires n'auront aucune information d'identification, sauf un numéro de recherche.

Cette étude est dirigée par le Dr. Danielle Julien, professeure-chercheuse du Département de psychologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Si dans le futur vous aviez, toi ou tes parents, des questions ou désiriez des informations supplémentaires sur cette étude, nous serons disponibles pour vous répondre. De plus, si tu le désires, nous t'offrons une consultation gratuite avec un psychologue.

« J'ai lu la description ci-dessus des activités de la rencontre et je comprends ce qu'on attend de moi au cours de ces activités. Je désire participer à cette étude. J'accepte d'être enregistré. J'accepte également que l'information recueillie puisse être utilisée pour fins de communication scientifique et professionnelle. Il est entendu que l'anonymat sera respecté à mon égard ».

Signature-participante

Date

Signature-chercheur( e)

Date



Projet communication famille  
Laboratoire de recherche sur le couple et son environnement  
Département de psychologie

Diffusion des enregistrements

J'accepte que l'enregistrement de mon entrevue soit diffusé dans les contextes suivants:

Encercler

Lors de conférences scientifiques	om	non
Pour fins d'enseignement	om	non

J'accepte que les renseignements vidéoscopiques de mes discussions soient diffusés dans les contextes suivants:

Encercler

Lors de conférences scientifiques	oui	non
Pour fins d'enseignement	oui	non
Aux médias, pour fins de vulgarisation	oui	non
Aux médias, dans le cadre de reportage	oui	non

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-participante (e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature-chercheur( e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Formulaire de consentement-participant au suivi

## Étude sur le suivi longitudinal du projet communication-famille

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'influence des interactions familiales que tu as vécues pendant l'adolescence sur ton développement comme jeune femme et ta communication avec ton ami(e). Ta participation implique que tu répondes à différents questionnaires au sujet de tes sentiments vis-à-vis toi et les autres et à une entrevue durant laquelle tu devras répondre à des questions par rapport à des images qui te seront présentées. Il n'existe pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses à nos questions. Finalement, toi et ton ami(e) discuterez ensemble de deux sources de difficultés que tu rencontres dans ta vie, une en lien avec la vie en général, et l'autre en lien avec tes relations amoureuses. La rencontre durera approximativement deux heures.

Tout au long de la rencontre, tu es libre de t'impliquer à ton rythme et même de cesser ta participation si tu le désires.

Pour nous aider à mieux comprendre le contenu de l'entrevue, nous l'enregistrerons sur une bande audio. Pour la même raison, les interactions avec ton amie seront enregistrées sur bande vidéo. Ces bandes audio et vidéo seront la propriété exclusive du Laboratoire de Recherche sur le Couple et son Environnement et ne seront écoutées que par les assistants de recherche chargés de l'analyse des enregistrements, ainsi que par la directrice du laboratoire. De plus, afin d'assurer une plus grande confidentialité, l'enregistrement ne contiendra aucune information permettant de t'identifier, sauf un numéro de recherche.

Cette étude est dirigée par le Dr Danielle Julien, professeure-chercheure au Département de Psychologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Si dans le futur tu avais des questions ou désirerais obtenir des informations sur cette étude, nous serons disponibles pour te répondre.

« J'ai lu la description ci-dessus des activités de la rencontre et je comprends ce qu'on attend de moi au cours de ces activités. Je désire participer à cette rencontre et j'accepte d'y être enregistrée. J'accepte également que l'information recueillie puisse être utilisée pour fins de communication scientifique et professionnelle. Il est entendu que l'anonymat sera respecté à mon égard. »

---

signature de la participante

---

date

---

signature —chercheure

---

date

Formulaire de consentement-ami (e)

Étude sur le suivi longitudinal du projet communication-famille

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner les différents styles de communication que les jeunes femmes peuvent avoir avec leur ami(e). Ta participation à la présente recherche implique que tu répondes à différents questionnaires au sujet de tes sentiments vis-à-vis toi et les autres. Il n'existe pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses à nos questions. Finalement, toi et ton amie discuterez ensemble de deux sources de difficultés qu'elle rencontre dans sa vie. La rencontre durera approximativement deux heures.

Tout au long de la rencontre, tu es libre de t'impliquer à ton rythme et même de cesser ta participation si tu le désires.

Pour nous aider à mieux comprendre le contenu des interactions avec ton amie, elles seront enregistrées sur bande vidéo. Ces bandes vidéo seront la propriété exclusive du Laboratoire de Recherche sur le Couple et son Environnement et ne seront écoutées que par les assistants de recherche chargés de l'analyse des enregistrements, ainsi que par la directrice du laboratoire. De plus, afin d'assurer une plus grande confidentialité, l'enregistrement ne contiendra aucune information permettant de t'identifier, sauf un numéro de recherche.

Cette étude est dirigée par le Dr Danielle Julien, professeure-chercheure au Département de Psychologie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Si dans le futur tu avais des questions ou désirerais obtenir des informations sur cette étude, nous serons disponibles pour te répondre.

« J'ai lu la description ci-dessus des activités de la rencontre et je comprends ce qu'on attend de moi au cours de ces activités. Je désire participer à cette rencontre et j'accepte d'y être enregistré(e). J'accepte également que l'information recueillie puisse être utilisée pour fins de communication scientifique et professionnelle. Il est entendu que l'anonymat sera respecté à mon égard. »

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature de l'ami(e)

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature —chercheure

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

**APPENDICE B**

Projet communication famille  
Laboratoire de recherche sur le couple et son environnement  
Département de psychologie

### QUESTIONNAIRE D'INFORMATIONS GÉNÉRALES

1. Date de naissance: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Âge : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Sexe            Femme            1  
                     Homme            2

4. Quelle est votre origine ethnique? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Quel est votre diplôme d'étude le plus élevé?

(encerclez une seule réponse)

1. École primaire

2. École secondaire

3. Collégial (cégep) ou équivalent

4. Universitaire

6. Statut civil

1. Marié

2. Union de fait

3. Divorcé ou remarié

4. Nouvelle union de fait

5. Autres

7. Depuis combien de temps vivez-vous avec votre partenaire?

\_\_\_\_\_ années

8. De combien d'enfants êtes-vous le parent biologique? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Donnez l'âge des enfants \_\_\_\_\_

10. Combien d'enfants vivent avec vous et votre conjoint-e au moins deux (2) semaines par mois? \_\_\_\_\_

II. Quelle est votre occupation principale? (Encerclez une seule réponse)

1. Je fais un travail payé à plein temps à l'extérieur de la maison.

2. Je fais un travail payé à demi temps à l'extérieur de la maison.

3. Je m'occupe principalement des enfants et de la maison.

4. Je suis étudiant-e.

5. Je suis en chômage.

12. En dehors de mon-ma conjoint-e, mon revenu annuel est de:  
(Encerclez une seule réponse)

1. Moins de 10 000 \$

2. Entre 10 000\$ et 19 000 \$

3. Entre 20000 \$ et 29000 \$

4. Entre 30 000 \$ et 39 000 \$

5. 40000 \$ et plus

## APPENDICE C

I

**ENTREVUE SUR**  
**LES RELATIONS FAMILIALES**  
**(Traduction de l'Adult Attachment Interview (AAI))**

**Mars 1995**



Notre équipe de recherche effectue une étude où l'on demande à des parents comment les relations qu'ils ont eues avec leurs propres parents les ont influencés comme parents et adulte. Alors, j'aimerais vous poser des questions sur les relations que vous aviez avec vos parents quand vous étiez jeune et sur la manière dont vous pensez que ces relations pourraient vous avoir affecté. Je vais vous poser des questions surtout sur votre enfance, mais nous aborderons aussi les années qui suivent l'enfance ainsi que vos relations actuelles avec vos parents (s'ils sont toujours vivants). De plus, j'aimerais vous poser quelques questions sur votre relation avec votre conjoint.

1. Pour commencer, j'aimerais, pour m'aider à connaître votre famille, que vous me la décriviez au moment où vous étiez enfant. Par exemple, où vous êtes né, où vous viviez, déménagiez-vous souvent, qu'est-ce que vos parents faisaient pour gagner leur vie, et ainsi de suite?

- Est-ce que vous voyiez souvent vos grand-parents lorsque vous étiez enfant?

(Oui)

- Qu'est-ce que vous vous rappelez d'eux?

(Si certain n'ont pas été connu)

- Est-ce qu'ils sont décédés avant votre naissance?

(Oui)

- Est-ce que la mère de votre père est décédée avant votre naissance? .

Qu'elle âge avait-elle à ce moment, le savez-vous?

- Est-ce que votre mère parlait de son père?

- Aviez-vous des frères ou des soeurs, ou d'autres personnes qui vivaient dans la maison?

- Est-ce qu'ils vivent près de chez vous ou est-ce que votre famille est plutôt éparpillée?

2. J'aimerais que vous me décriviez votre relation avec vos parents lorsque vous étiez enfant... si vous pouviez commencer par le plus loin dont vous pouvez vous souvenir?
3. Maintenant, j'aimerais vous demander de choisir 5 adjectifs qui décrivent la relation que vous avez eue avec votre mère quand vous étiez enfant? Je sais que cela est difficile et que cela peut prendre un peu de temps, alors prenez le temps d'y penser.

· C'est bien, maintenant j'aimerais vous poser des questions sur ces adjectifs. Vous avez dit qu'elle était (expression du participant). Est-ce que vous vous rappelez d'une occasion ou d'un souvenir où votre mère était (expression du participant)?

4. Maintenant, j'aimerais vous demander de choisir 5 adjectifs qui décrivent la relation que vous avez eue avec votre père quand vous étiez enfant? Ici encore, je sais que cela est difficile et peu prendre un peu de temps, alors prenez le temps d'y penser.

· C'est bien, maintenant j'aimerais vous poser des questions sur ces adjectifs. Vous avez dit qu'il était (expression du participant). Est-ce que vous vous rappelez d'une occasion ou d'un souvenir où votre père était (expression du participant)?

5. Avec lequel de vos parents vous sentiez-vous le plus proche?

.. Pouvez-vous me dire pourquoi.

Qu'est-ce qui fait que cela est différent avec l'autre parent?

6. Quand les choses n'allaient pas pour vous quand vous étiez enfant que faisiez-vous?

· Quand vous étiez bouleversé émotionnellement, c'est-à-dire triste ou fâché, que faisiez-vous?

· Pouvez-vous me raconter une fois où cela est arrivé et qu'est-ce qui c'est passé.

· Est-ce que vous pouvez vous rappeler ce qui se passait quand vous vous étiez fait mal ou un peu blessé physiquement?

· Pouvez-vous me raconter une fois où c'est arrivé et qu'est-ce qui c'est passé.

· Est-ce que vous étiez malade quand vous étiez enfant?

· Pouvez-vous me raconter une fois où c'est arrivé et qu'est-ce qui s'est passé.

7. Vous rappelez-vous de la première fois où vous avez été séparé de vos parents?

.. Comment réagissiez-vous?

Comment vos parents réagissaient?

· Est-ce qu'il vous vient à l'esprit d'autres moments de séparation?

8. Est-ce que vous vous êtes déjà senti rejeté par vos parents quand vous étiez enfant? Bien sur, en regardant en arrière, vous pouvez vous rendre compte que cela n'était

pas vraiment du rejet, mais ce que je cherche à savoir c'est si vous vous êtes déjà senti rejeté quand vous étiez enfant?

.. Quel âge aviez-vous à ce moment?

Qu'avez-vous fait?

.. D'après vous, pourquoi croyiez-vous que vos parents ont fait ce qu'ils ont fait?

Pensez-vous qu'ils se rendaient compte qu'ils vous faisaient vivre du rejet.

9. Est-ce que vos parents vous ont déjà fait des menaces de quelque façon que ce soit, peut-être pour vous discipliner ou pour faire des blagues?

· Certains parents nous ont dit par exemple que leurs parents les menaçaient de les abandonner ou de les envoyer ailleurs. Quelques parents ont parfois des souvenirs d'avoir été abusé.

· Est-ce que quelque chose comme ça vous est déjà arrivé ou est déjà arrivé dans votre famille?

.. Quel âge aviez-vous à ce moment?

Est-ce que cela se produisait souvent?

· Sentez-vous que cette expérience vous affecte maintenant comme adulte?

Est-ce que cela influence votre approche avec votre enfant?

10. Comment pensez-vous que ces expériences avec vos parents vous ont affecté dans votre personnalité adulte.

· Il y a-t-il des aspects de vos premières expériences qui ont pénalisé votre développement?

11. Pourquoi, croyiez-vous que vos parents ont agi comme ils l'ont fait au cours de votre enfance?

12. Il y avait-il d'autres adultes avec lesquelles vous vous sentiez proche, comme des parents?, lorsque vous étiez enfant? Ou n'importe quel adulte qui était spécialement important pour vous, bien qu'il ne soit pas un parent?

13. Avez-vous déjà perdu un parent ou un proche quand vous étiez enfant?

.. Pouvez-vous me parler des circonstances et me dire quel âge vous aviez. Comment avez-vous réagi à ce moment? Est-ce que le décès était soudain ou prévisible?

Est-ce que vous vous rappelez comment vous vous sentiez?

.. Est-ce que vos sentiments face à ce décès ont changé au cours du temps?

Vous a-t-on permis d'aller aux funérailles?

- (Si perte d'un parent ou d'un enfant) Comment a réagi (l'autre parent et la famille) et comment cela a changé au cours des années?
- Diriez-vous que cette perte a eu un effet sur votre personnalité?

13a. Avez-vous perdu une autre personne importante durant votre enfance?

- .. Pouvez-vous me parler des circonstances et me dire quel âge vous aviez. Comment avez-vous réagi à ce moment? Est-ce que le décès était soudain ou prévisible?
- .. Est-ce que vous vous rappelez comment vous vous sentiez?
- .. Est-ce que vos sentiments face à ce décès ont changé au cours du temps?
- .. Vous a-t-on permis d'aller aux funérailles?
- .. (Si perte d'un parent ou d'un enfant) Comment a réagi (l'autre parent et la famille) et comment cela a changé au cours des années?
- .. Diriez-vous que cette perte a eu un effet sur votre personnalité?

13b. Avez-vous perdu une personne importante pour vous depuis que vous êtes adulte?

- .. Pouvez-vous me parler des circonstances et me dire quel âge vous aviez. Comment avez-vous réagi à ce moment? Est-ce que le décès était soudain ou prévisible?
- .. Est-ce que vous vous rappelez comment vous vous sentiez?
- .. Est-ce que vos sentiments face à ce décès ont changé au cours du temps?
- .. Vous a-t-on permis d'aller aux funérailles?
- .. (Si perte d'un parent ou d'un enfant) Comment a réagi (l'autre parent et la famille) et comment cela a changé au cours des années?
- .. Diriez-vous que cette perte a eu un effet sur votre personnalité?

14. Est-ce qu'il y a eu beaucoup de changement dans votre relation avec vos parents depuis votre enfance? Je veux dire depuis l'enfance jusqu'à présent?

15. Comment est votre relation avec vos parents actuellement?

- C1 Maintenant, j'aimerais vous demander de choisir 5 adjectifs qui décrivent la relation que vous avez avec votre conjoint(e). Je sais que cela est difficile et peu prendre un peu de temps, alors prenez le temps d'y penser.
- C'est bien, maintenant j'aimerais vous poser des questions sur ces adjectifs. Vous avez dit qu'il/elle était (expression du participant). Est-ce que vous vous rappelez d'un moment ou d'un souvenir où votre conjoint(e) était (expression du participant)?
- C2 Quand les choses vont mal, par exemple quand vous êtes stressé, triste ou inquiet, qu'est-ce que vous faites?
- .. Pouvez-vous en parler avec votre conjoint?
  - Est-ce que vous trouvez ça aidant, est-ce qu'il vous comprend bien?
  - .. Pouvez-vous me raconter un moment où c'est arrivé?
  - .. Comment votre partenaire réagit?
  - Comment aimeriez-vous que votre partenaire réagisse?
- C3 Est-ce que vous trouvez votre partenaire affectueux? Quels sont les gestes qu'il/elle fait que vous trouvez affectueux?
- Est-ce que vous vous considérez une personne affectueuse? Quel est votre façon d'exprimer votre affection.
  - .. Est-ce que vous vous dites souvent que vous l'aimez?
  - Est-ce que vous vous êtes déjà senti rejeté par votre partenaire?
  - Est-ce que vous vous êtes déjà senti négligé?
- C4 Plusieurs des couples que nous rencontrons racontent avoir eu des hauts et des bas. Diriez-vous que ça vous est arrivé?
- .. Dans le passé avez-vous, vous ou votre conjoint, déjà songé de vous séparer?
  - .. Dans quelles circonstances?
  - Comment avez-vous réagi?
  - Comment il ou elle a réagi?
  - Qu'est-ce qui a fait que vous êtes resté ensemble?

## APPENDICE D

### LISTE DES SUJETS DE DISCUSSION

Ci-dessous tu trouveras une liste de sujets que tu as discutés à différents moments à la maison.  
Encerle oui si tu as discuté de ce sujet avec ta mère dans les quatre dernières semaines.  
Encerle non si ce n'est pas le cas.

Maintenant regarde à nouveau la liste. Pour les items dont tu as encerclés oui, répond à ces deux questions.

1. Combien de fois durant les quatre dernières semaines cela s'est-il produit?  
(Écrit un chiffre)
2. Comment a été la discussion?

Sujets	Combien de fois	Calme	Un peu difficile	Difficile
1. Appels téléphoniques      oui      non				
2. L'heure d'aller au lit      oui      non				
3. Nettoyer ta chambre      oui      non				
4. Faire tes devoirs      oui      non				
5. Ramasser tes vêtements      oui      non				
6. Écouter la télévision      oui      non				
7. Propreté personnelle (prendre une douche, se brosser les dents, etc.)      oui      non				
8. Type de vêtements que tu portes      oui      non				
9. La propreté de tes vêtements      oui      non				
10. Faire du bruit à la maison      oui      non				
11. Les manières à table      oui      non				
12. Te chicanier avec tes frères et sœurs      oui      non				
13. Sacrer      oui      non				
14. Dépenser ton argent      oui      non				

1. Combien de fois      2. Comment a été la  
durant les quatre      discussion?  
dernières semaines  
cela s'est-il produit?  
(Écrit un chiffre)

Sujets			Combien de fois	Calme	Un peu difficile	Difficile
33. Aider aux tâches à la maison	oui	non				
34. Parler avec tes parents	oui	non				
35. Se laver le matin	oui	non				
36. Déranger les parents quand ils demandent de rester seuls	oui	non				
37. Être dérangée quand tu veux rester seule	oui	non				
38. Mettre tes pieds sur les meubles	oui	non				
39. Mettre la maison en désordre	oui	non				
40. L'heure des repas	oui	non				
41. Comment passer tes temps libres	oui	non				
42. Fumer	oui	non				
43. Gagner de l'argent à l'extérieur de la maison	oui	non				
44. Ce que tu manges vêtements	oui	non				
45. Autres (Expliques)	oui	non				



1. Combien de fois  
durant les quatre  
dernières semaines  
cela s'est-il produit?  
(Écrit un chiffre)
2. Comment a été la  
discussion?

Sujets			Combien de fois	Calme	Un peu difficile	Difficile
15. Choisir des livres ou films	oui	non				
16. Ton argent de poche	oui	non				
17. Des sorties sans les parents	oui	non				
18. Écouter la radio ou de la musique trop fort	oui	non				
19. Fermer la lumière dans la maison	oui	non				
20. Prendre de la drogue	oui	non				
21. Prendre soin des disques, ta bicyclette, des animaux, etc	oui	non				
22. Prendre de la bière ou d'autres boissons	oui	non				
23. Acheter des disques, des jeux ou autres	oui	non				
24. Aller à un rendez-vous	oui	non				
25. Le choix de tes amis-es	oui	non				
26. L'achat de nouveaux vêtements	oui	non				
27. La sexualité	oui	non				
28. Revenir à la maison à l'heure	oui	non				
29. Se rendre à l'école à l'heure	oui	non				
30. Avoir de mauvaises notes	oui	non				
31. Faire du trouble à l'école	oui	non				
32. Mentir	oui	non				

**APPENDICE E**

## PARQ version "adolescent"

Tu as à compléter un questionnaire différent pour ta mère, ton père (ou le conjoint de ta mère).

Les pages qui suivent contiennent un nombre de phrases décrivant la façon dont les mères et les pères agissent envers leurs enfants. Lis chaque phrase soigneusement et essaie de penser si elles décrivent la façon dont ta mère, ton père (ou le conjoint de ta mère) agit avec toi.

Il n'y a pas de bonne ou de mauvaise réponse pour chaque phrase. Essaie d'être le plus juste possible. Réponds à chaque item en fonction de ce qui se passe réellement à la maison et non de la façon que tu voudrais que ta mère, ton père (ou le conjoint de ta mère) agisse envers toi.

Exemple.

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ma mère (mon père ou le conjoint de ma mère)<br>me félicite et m'embrasse quand je suis gentille. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---|---|---|---|

Maintenant, va à la page suivante pour répondre au questionnaire.

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

MA MÈRE, (MON PÈRE OU LE CONJOINT DE MA MÈRE SELON LE CAS)

1. Parle de moi gentiment.	1	2	3	4
2. Me critique ou me gronde quand je ne suis pas sage.	1	2	3	4
3. M'ignore complètement.	1	2	3	4
4. Ne m'aime pas vraiment.	1	2	3	4
5. Me parle de projets de nos projets et écoute ce que j'ai à dire.	1	2	3	4
6. Se plaint de moi auprès des autres quand je ne lui obéis pas.	1	2	3	4
7. S'intéresse réellement à elle.	1	2	3	4
8. M'encourage à inviter mes amis-es à la maison et les reçoit bien.	1	2	3	4
9. Me ridiculise et se moque de moi.	1	2	3	4
10. Ne s'occupe de moi que pour me gronder.	1	2	3	4
11. M'engueule quand elle (il) est fâché-e.	1	2	3	4
12. M'aide à lui dire ce qui me tient à cœur.	1	2	3	4
13. Est dur-e avec moi.	1	2	3	4

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

MA MÈRE, (MON PÈRE OU LE CONJOINT DE MA MÈRE SELON LE CAS)

14. Aime que je sois là.	1	2	3	4
15. Me félicite quand je travaille bien.	1	2	3	4
16. Me frappe même quand je ne le mérite pas.	1	2	3	4
17. Oublie ses promesses.	1	2	3	4
18. Me considère comme une grande soeur.	1	2	3	4
19. Fait des compliments sur moi.	1	2	3	4
20. Me punit sévèrement quand elle(il) est en colère.	1	2	3	4
21. Veille à ce que je mange bien.	1	2	3	4
22. Me parle avec chaleur et amour.	1	2	3	4
23. Se fâche facilement contre moi.	1	2	3	4
24. Est trop occupé-e pour répondre à mes questions.	1	2	3	4
25. À l'air de ne pas m'aimer.	1	2	3	4
26. Me dit des choses gentilles quand je le mérite.	1	2	3	4

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

MA MÈRE, (MON PÈRE OU LE CONJOINT DE MA MÈRE SELON LE CAS)

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 27. Se met vite en rogne et s'en prend à moi.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. Veut savoir qui sont ses amis-es.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. S'intéresse vraiment à ce que je fais.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. Me dit beaucoup de choses désagréables.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. Ne me répond pas quand j'ai besoin de son aide.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. Pense que c'est de ma faute si j'ai des ennuis.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. Avec elle (lui), je me sens désirée et utile.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. Me dit que je l'agace.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. Fait très attention à moi.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. Me dit comme elle (il) est fière (fier) quand je suis sage.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. Fait tout ce qu'elle (il) peut pour me faire de la peine.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. Oublie des choses importantes dont elle (il) devrait se souvenir.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. J'ai l'impression qu'elle (il) ne m'aime plus quand je me conduis mal. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

MA MÈRE, (MON PÈRE OU LE CONJOINT DE MA MÈRE SELON LE CAS)

40. Accorde de l'importance à ce que je fais.	1	2	3	4
41. Me fait peur ou me menace quand je fais quelque chose de mal.	1	2	3	4
42. Aime rester près de moi.	1	2	3	4
43. Essaie de m'aider quand je suis effrayée ou bouleversée.	1	2	3	4
44. M'humilie devant mes amis-es quand je fais des bêtises.	1	2	3	4
45. Essaie d'être le moins souvent possible avec moi.	1	2	3	4
46. Se plaint à mon sujet.	1	2	3	4
47. Attache de l'importance à mes opinions et aime les entendre.	1	2	3	4
48. Trouve que les autres adolescentes font tout mieux que moi.	1	2	3	4
49. Tient compte de mes désirs quand elle (il) fait des projets.	1	2	3	4
50. Me laisse faire ce qui a de l'importance pour moi, même si ça la (le) gêne.	1	2	3	4
51. Trouve que les autres adolescentes se conduisent mieux que moi.	1	2	3	4
52. Me confie à d'autre (un voisin ou un parent par exemple).	1	2	3	4

1. Presque toujours vrai
2. Parfois vrai
3. Rarement vrai
4. Faux

MA MÈRE, (MON PÈRE OU LE CONJOINT DE MA MÈRE SELON LE CAS)

53. Me fait sentir que je suis indésirable.	1	2	3	4
54. S'intéresse aux choses que je fais.	1	2	3	4
55. Essaie de me soulager quand je suis triste ou malade.	1	2	3	4
56. Me dit combien elle (il) a honte quand je me tient mal.	1	2	3	4
57. Me fait sentir qu'elle (il) m'aime.	1	2	3	4
58. Est douce (doux) et gentille (gentil) avec moi.	1	2	3	4
59. Me fait sentir honteuse et coupable quand je me conduit mal.	1	2	3	4
60. Essaie de me rendre heureuse.	1	2	3	4



## APPENDICE F

Département de psychologie  
Laboratoire de recherche sur  
La famille et son environnement



Le 15 novembre 2000

Madame, Monsieur,

Vous avez participé avec votre fille ..... à une étude portant sur la communication familiale en 19.... Cette étude était dirigée par Danielle Julien, au laboratoire de recherche sur le couple de l'UQAM. Nous envisageons actuellement la possibilité d'entamer une 2<sup>e</sup> phase de ce projet de recherche auprès des adolescentes devenues maintenant jeunes adultes.

Comme votre fille ..... a participé à l'étude initiale, nous aimerions reprendre contact avec elle afin de vérifier son intérêt à poursuivre la recherche. Nous sollicitons votre collaboration afin de la rejoindre. Pour ce faire, nous communiquerons par téléphone avec vous au courant de la semaine prochaine. Évidemment, une compensation financière sera offerte à votre fille en échange de sa participation.

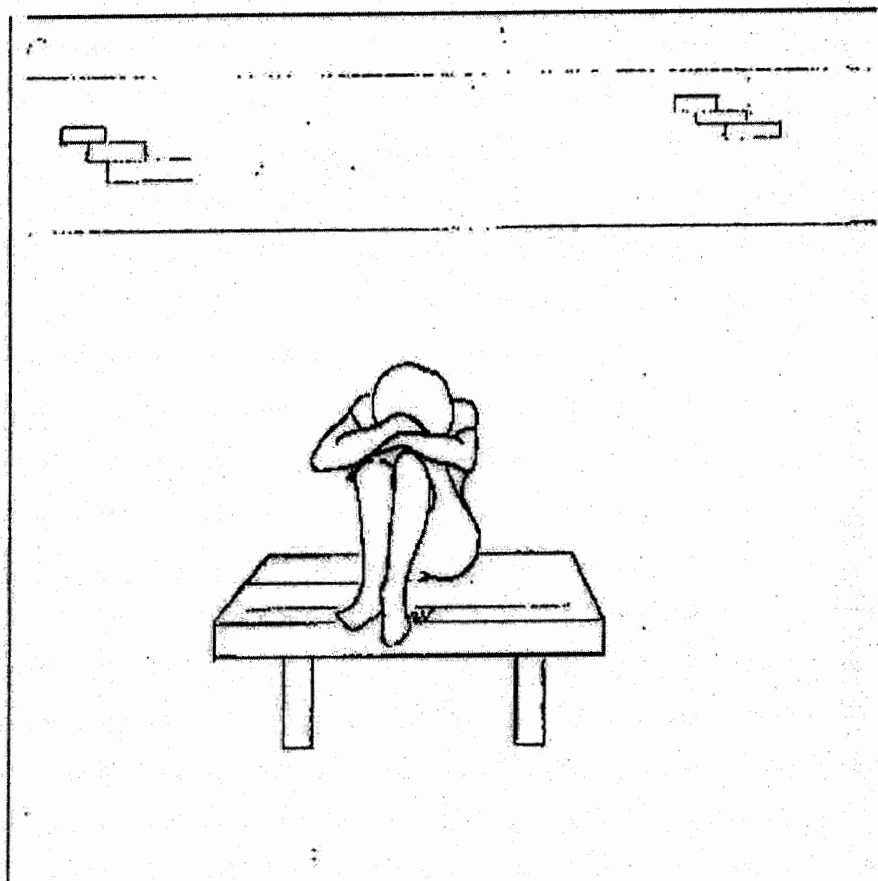
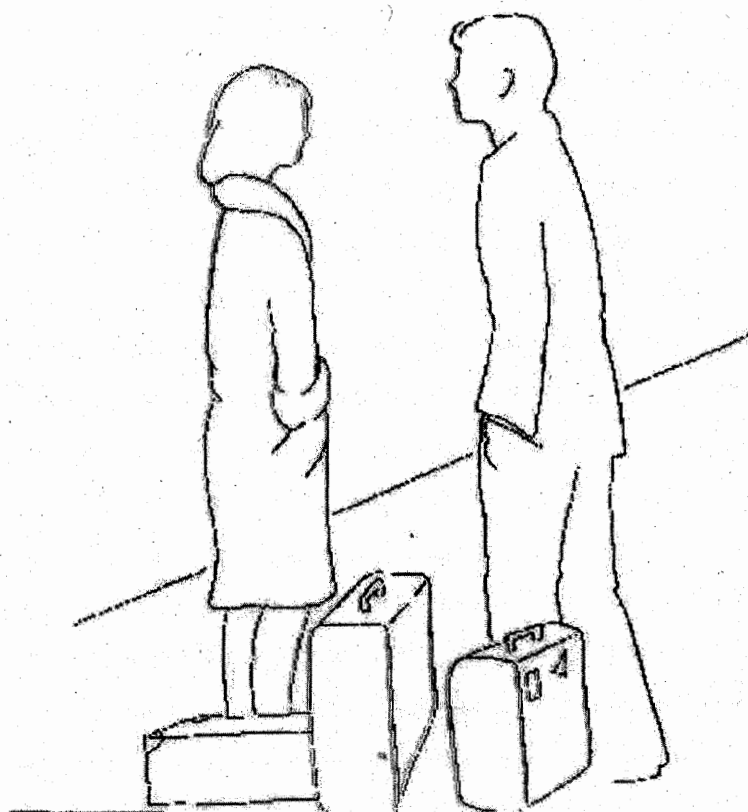
Vous pouvez nous rejoindre au laboratoire de recherche s'il vous est absolument impossible de nous répondre au cours de la semaine prochaine, au numéro de téléphone suivant : (514) 987-3000, poste 3932.

Nous vous remercions à l'avance de votre collaboration,

Hélène Baril  
Étudiante au doctorat à l'UQAM

Marie-Claude Simard  
Étudiante au doctorat à l'UQAM

## APPENDICE G



## APPENDICE H

# Questionnaire sur la relation avec la mère

(Walkers et Thompson, 1983)

Encercliez, pour chaque phrase, le chiffre qui correspond le mieux à votre relation actuelle avec votre mère.

*Dans ma relation avec ma mère...*

	Pas vrai		Moyennement vrai				Très vrai
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Nous avons envie de passer du temps ensemble.							
2. Elle montre qu'elle m'aime.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Nous sommes honnêtes l'une envers l'autre.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Nous pouvons accepter les critiques que l'autre fait de nos défauts et de nos erreurs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Nous nous apprécions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Nous nous respectons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Elle rend ma vie meilleure et je rends la sienne meilleure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Nous apprécions notre relation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Elle se soucie de mes sentiments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Nous sentons unies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Il y a beaucoup de générosité dans notre relation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Elle agit toujours dans mon meilleur intérêt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Je suis chanceuse de l'avoir dans ma vie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Elle me fait toujours me sentir mieux.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. Elle est importante pour moi	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Nous nous aimons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. J'ai confiance en cette relation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## APPENDICE I



## SCL-90-R

Traduit et adapté par Fabienne Fortin, Ph.D.  
et Ginette Coutu Wakulczyk, M.Sc.

Voici une liste de problèmes dont se plaignent parfois les gens. Lisez attentivement chaque énoncé et encerclez le chiffre qui décrit le mieux COMBIEN VOUS AVEZ ÉTÉ INCOMMODE-E PAR CE PROBLEME DURANT LES SEPT (7) DERNIERS JOURS, INCLUANT AUJOURD'HUI.

(Encerclez le chiffre qui correspond à chacune de vos réponses)

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Passable- ment	Beaucoup	Excessive- ment
1. Maux de tête .....	0	1	2	3	4
2. Nervosité ou impres- sions de tremblements intérieurs .....	0	1	2	3	4
3. Pensées désagréables répétées dont vous ne pouvez pas vous débarrasser .....	0	1	2	3	4
4. Faiblesses ou étour- dissements .....	0	1	2	3	4
5. Diminution du plaisir ou de l'intérêt sexuel .....	0	1	2	3	4
6. Envie de critiquer les autres .....	0	1	2	3	4
7. L'idée que quelqu'un peut contrôler vos pensées .....	0	1	2	3	4
8. L'impression que d'autres sont responsables de la plupart de vos problèmes .....	0	1	2	3	4
9. Difficulté à vous rappeler certaines choses .....	0	1	2	3	4

## SCL-90-R

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Passable- ment	Beaucoup	Excessive- ment
10. Inquiétude face à la négligence et l'in- souciance .....	0	1	2	3	4
11. Facilement irrité-e et contrarié-e .....	0	1	2	3	4
12. Douleurs à la poitrine ou cardiaques .....	0	1	2	3	4
13. Peur dans des espaces ouverts ou sur la rue .....	0	1	2	3	4
14. Sentiment de vous sentir au ralenti ou de manquer d'énergie	0	1	2	3	4
15. Des pensées à vous enlever la vie .....	0	1	2	3	4
16. Entend des voix que les autres n'entendent pas ....	0	1	2	3	4
17. Des tremblements ...	0	1	2	3	4
18. Le sentiment que vous ne pouvez pas avoir confiance en personne .....	0	1	2	3	4
19. Manque d'appétit ...	0	1	2	3	4
20. Pleurer facilement .	0	1	2	3	4
21. Timidité ou mala- dresse avec les personnes du sexe opposé .....	0	1	2	3	4
22. Sentiments d'être pris-e au piège ....	0	1	2	3	4
23. Soudainement effrayé-e sans raison .....	0	1	2	3	4
24. Crises de colère incontrôlables .....	0	1	2	3	4

## SCL-90-R

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Passable- ment	Beaucoup	Excessive- ment
64. Vous réveiller tôt le matin .....	0	1	2	3	4
65. Besoin de répéter les mêmes actions telles que toucher, compter, laver .....	0	1	2	3	4
66. Avoir un sommeil agité ou perturbé ..	0	1	2	3	4
67. Envies de briser ou de fracasser des objets .....	0	1	2	3	4
68. Avoir des idées ou des opinions que les autres ne partagent pas .....	0	1	2	3	4
69. Tendance à l'anxiété en présence d'autres personnes .....	0	1	2	3	4
70. Vous sentir mal à l'aise dans des foules telles au centre d'achat ou au cinéma .....	0	1	2	3	4
71. Sentiment que tout est un effort .....	0	1	2	3	4
72. Moments de terreur et de panique .....	0	1	2	3	4
73. Sensations d'incon- fort d'avoir à boire ou à manger en public .....	0	1	2	3	4
74. Vous disputer sou- vent .....	0	1	2	3	4
75. Nervosité lorsque vous êtes laissé-e seul-e .....	0	1	2	3	4

## SCL-90-R

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Passable- ment	Beaucoup	Excessive- ment
76. Vous n'êtes pas reconnu-e à votre juste valeur .....	0	1	2	3	4
77. Sentiment de soli- tude même avec d'autres .....	0	1	2	3	4
78. Vous sentir telle- ment tendu-e que vous ne pouvez pas rester en place ....	0	1	2	3	4
79. Sentiment d'être bon-ne à rien .....	0	1	2	3	4
80. Sentiment qu'il va vous arriver quelque chose de néfaste ...	0	1	2	3	4
81. Crier et lancer des objets .....	0	1	2	3	4
82. Peur de perdre connaissance en public .....	0	1	2	3	4
83. Sentiment que les gens vont profiter de vous si vous les laissez faire .....	0	1	2	3	4
84. Des pensées sexuelles qui vous troublent beaucoup .....	0	1	2	3	4
85. L'idée que vous devriez être puni-e pour vos péchés ....	0	1	2	3	4
86. Pensées ou visions qui vous effraient .	0	1	2	3	4
87. L'idée que votre corps est sérieuse- ment atteint .....	0	1	2	3	4
88. Ne jamais vous sen- tir près de quelqu'un d'autre .....	0	1	2	3	4

## SCL-90-R

	Pas du tout	Un peu	Passable- ment	Beaucoup	Excessive- ment
89. Avoir des sentiments de culpabilité .....	0	1	2	3	4
90. L'idée que votre esprit (tête) est dérangé .....	0	1	2	3	4

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